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OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
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SPEARING A LEOPARD.

FRONTISPIECE

LETTERS

ON

SPORT IN EASTERN BENGAL.

BY

FRANK B. SIMSON
(BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE, RETIRED).

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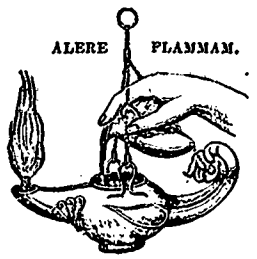

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* * * * * prepare the spear:
* * * * * * * *

Foil'd, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,
Full in the centre stands the boar at bay,
Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast,
And foes disabled.

(*From 'Childe Harold,' with the alteration of one word.*)

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SPORT

IN

EASTERN BENGAL.

LETTER No. 1.—*INTRODUCTORY.*

You have asked me to give you the benefit of my advice and experience in shikar matters in Eastern Bengal, to enable you, as a young English gentleman appointed to H.M.'s Civil Service, to employ to the utmost sporting advantage such time as you may be able to spare from a zealous and conscientious fulfilment of your duties as a Government official, during a career now beginning, and which it is to be hoped may extend over a quarter of a century. I propose to do this for you in a series of letters, pointing out the manner in which you may spend your leisure, your holidays—Christian, Mahommedan, and Hindoo—and such special leave as you may be able to obtain. I trust these letters, founded on notes in a diary kept since 1847, and memory and other sources of information, may be of real use to you: at any rate they will contain the record of my shooting-experience in Eastern Bengal for a very long period, and give details of a very long series of years in which I endeavoured to obtain the greatest amount of sport I could, regardless of other amusements and at a very large annual outlay; and also contain accounts of adventures on horseback and in the howdah, with spear, rifle, and gun, which I have been very constantly urged by many friends to put on record.

Things must have greatly changed since the events to be related in these letters took place, and you must not expect to go to the very places I have named and find sport such as I did. This, however, is natural and has always been so. At one time Cossim Bazaar near Moorshedabad was the

best place for a tiger-shooting party. There are no tigers there now. Tiger-shooters go nearer Assam and the foot of the Himalayas for their sport. Long before my time the best hog-hunting in the Noakholly district was found between Tippera and Suderam, but no hog was left in that country when I joined. My best sport was at Siddhee and Hingootea, but the latter chur was carried off by the encroachment of the Megna river before I left India. Thus you too, if you properly seek for the best sport, must be prepared to look for it not in the same places, but in similar though different ground.

LETTER No. 2.—*THE SHIKARRY.*

A good Shikarry essential to all sport. A Mahommedan for choice; reasons for this.—Certain necessary qualifications; obedience and truthfulness.—My man Budderuddeen.—Do not engage a Calcutta man.—His chief use.—In addition to using the Shikarry, use other methods of obtaining knowledge as to sport.—If you secure a good Shikarry, take pains to retain his services.

THE first necessary thing is to have a good shikarry. You should choose a Mahommedan. I have known good Hindoo shikarries, but for many reasons a Mahommedan is preferable. Very much of your sport in Eastern Bengal will be connected with boats. A Mussulman is much more at home on a boat than a Hindoo. He will eat on board, and he will join in the meals cooked by other Musselmans. There is but one "jāt," so to speak, of Mahommedans, but the different sects of Hindoos, all feeding and cooking separately, are numerous: some must cook in a limited circle on land; if this circle should be invaded the meal is thrown away. Most mahouts are Mahommedan, and a Hindoo shikarry cannot associate at meals with them.

Most of the villages from which the best information can be obtained in lonely places are Mahommedan. Hindoos often object to animals being killed in the neighbourhood of their homes. They religiously protect peacocks and jungle-fowl, and, in a lesser degree, hogs and buffaloes, and generally are more averse to giving "khubber" even of tigers than Mahommedans. Mahommedans also are more willing to cultivate jungly portions of distant country where the best sport is likely to be found. Hindoos cling to the old neighbourhood of their families. For these reasons, and many more which I could give if required, I prefer a Mahommedan shikarry in Eastern Bengal to a Hindoo.

The shikarry would naturally be a shikarry by profession, fond of sport and a keen observer of the habits of birds and animals. But the chief points are that he should be obedient, and go exactly where he is ordered, and truthful, telling you what he sees with his own eyes—not reporting as his own

actual observation the mere hearsay information picked up from here, there, and everywhere, except from the exact places he was told to examine.

I had only two shikarries between 1847 and 1872. The first was a Calcutta man, and he certainly knew every acre of good ground within twelve miles of Calcutta. Every place where snipe were ever to be found, and the likely times to find them, he knew, and a little about ducks; but he was a liar and a thief, and required most careful management. After I left Calcutta he obtained easy employment as a chuprassy and a shikarry with a sporting Calcutta merchant. My second was a Noakholly man, Budderuddeen by name—an honest, truthful, hardworking man, with an eye like a telescope, and on whose reports I could always rely. He stayed with me during all my Indian career, and made himself happy in all districts but Purneah. I will say little about him here, as he will be constantly referred to afterwards. He was rather delicate and given to fevers.

You must not choose a Calcutta man, but take one used to the mofussil, with no objection to going great distances from his home. You will find, if your shikarry suits you and you suit him, that reasonable leave once a year, say in the rains, will content him; but a Calcutta man knows nothing except about snipe, and will be always wishing to go home, and for that purpose he will invent deaths and births, marriages and festivals, and any number of pressing reasons for his presence at his home.

Finally, referring to your selection of a shikarry, I may say that he is not easily to be found—that, for the most part, he must be "Fit non nascitur." You will have to teach him a very good deal. If you cannot hear of a good man who has been a sahib's servant before, you must search among your own or the police oomedwars, or hopeful aspirants for any place of pay. Crowds of these men flock to the Government officers who have any paltry appointments to give away. The heads of the police department, the Nazirs of the magistrates, and collector's officer know numbers of active individuals willing to go at once to any part of the zillah, and after trying a few of these you ought to hit off a likely individual.

The ordinary value of a shikarry near the place where you may be stationed consists in his being able to afford you the best employment for the limited time you may be able to give to sport, by ascertaining where game is assuredly to be found, and enabling you to avoid wearisome waste of time in searching for sport in places where game does not exist or is scarce. In snipe-shooting correct information is invaluable, and it was the secret of very much of my own success, which was generally attributed by others to luck. The ground that is good at one time is certain to be useless at another, with reference to all game, large or small, winged or hoofed; but for snipe the ground which is best one day may be useless three days later, and the art of being able to hit off the best snipe-ground just when most frequented by the birds requires observation and constant examination of the same spots. Harvest and sowing-

operations, weather, height and condition of crops, even certain winds require to be taken into consideration, and such matters have to be carefully thought over by a shikarry who knows his business. In the neighbourhood of his own home he probably would have a fair knowledge of the state of the country all the year round; but away from his home he has all this to learn; so when there is nothing else for him to do you can direct him to report as to the state of the ground, the jungle, and the crops in any villages, or estates, or pergunnahs which you may fix on from the map.

If there should be good sportsmen at the station to which you may be appointed, you will of course avail yourself of their knowledge and experience; but if there are no sahibs sportingly disposed, or if you are alone, and I may say generally, you will have to work out a country new to you entirely from your own resources. The best snipe-ground near the station and the best meets for hog-hunting and shooting are usually supposed to be well known, but a country (except in snipe and ducks) which is hard worked one season is seldom so good the next, and it should be the aim of the shikarry to give you information of the best and the middling and the worst country at the time you want to try that particular neighbourhood. I invariably found that Budderuddeen soon knew every place where the residents habitually hunted or shot, and quickly improved on that knowledge. I dare say this will appear in some of the following letters.

If you have obtained a man who, after full trial, proves himself a valuable servant, and one whose services you desire to retain permanently—a shikarry who, in addition to obedience and truthfulness, possesses a keen fondness for all manner of shikar, has telescopic powers of eyesight, can be perfectly silent under trying circumstances, who understands marking birds both alive and when shot, who can track animals and tell the difference between a footmark a day old and one that has been imprinted within the hour, who can tell the mark of a boar or a buck from that of a sow or a doe, who can distinguish between a grey duck and a pintail in the air, who knows how to catch hold of a tame buffalo or cow and guide him by the tail close up to the wary wild-fowl, or who possesses more accomplishments than these—you should bind him to you for ever with kindness and good pay. You must take an interest in his family, allow him leave when requisite, in the rains, to visit his home, you must get paltry Government appointments for his sons and his brothers and his nephews, you must have him tended in sickness and well clothed in winter, and take the greatest care of him, for if he is all I have hinted at he will be a most valuable aid to you—a kind of right hand at all your sport.

Letter No. 3.

Ways of finding out the capabilities of a district for good sport. Examine all procurable maps: take regular rides in all directions and make notes; make Shikarry report on tracts noted in the maps, especially where no shooting is going on.—Remarks as to Snipe-ground.—Proper inquiry demands disregard of ordinary fashionable daily routine. Inquiry from boats in districts much cut up with streams.—How sport from a district like Dacca may be ensured.—Shooting to be got from Calcutta.

If you are appointed to a station and have to find out the shikar capabilities of the neighbourhood for yourself, as far as snipe and perhaps duck are concerned you might follow the plan which I generally attempted to carry out, where good roads were found, or even where the generality of the ground could be ridden over on horseback. This is not possible in some districts, such as Backergunge or Dacca; but in most districts, such as Rajshahye, Tippera, or Jessore, you can go anywhere in a circle within a radius of twelve miles from headquarters. You should first secure a good map and learn as much as possible from this as to the roads, villages, jheels, bheels, and jungles, thannas, and hills if there are any; and every morning or evening when you have leisure you should ride out to certain places, taking note of every thing, and making all possible inquiries as to the land, crops, and jungles, and writing down the names of places for reference in a book or diary. If you consider certain localities look promising, you can almost always find in the Collector's office Government maps on a very large scale, and by studying them you will obtain an intimate knowledge of the nature of the country and the size of the villages, and see the exact position of all watery and marshy areas; the kinds of jungle will also be marked. After this you should send your shikarry to examine carefully certain particular spots and to report on them. In this way, in August, you should find out fairly what ground is likely to be good for snipe-shooting in all September and October; and by the time you have enjoyed the best snipe-shooting to be got within the circle above mentioned in those months, you will have had opportunities of learning about any places likely to afford hog-hunting or deer-shooting, and generally you may consider that a jheel, or low-lying country where a large space is covered by water and surrounded with uninhabited jungles of any kind (grass, rushes, or hoogla), will at some date yield good snipe-shooting, at another duck-shooting; and if deer and hog frequent the country at all, such places are sure to be resorted to by them at some season, probably when the crops in the neighbourhood are ripening; and as the crops are harvested and the grassy jungles half burnt, and the ground much dried up, and the amount of water greatly lessened, the best sport may be expected.

Wherever large plains of rice cultivation exist you may suppose, till your inquiries prove the contrary, that when the ground is in certain order and the crop not too thick, snipe should abound. In such land probably snipe-

shooting will be good for only two or three days in the season. It must be your endeavour with the aid of your shikarry to hit off these few days.

Snipe are very fond of fields where the rice-crop is about one foot or eighteen inches high, and the ground a sticky mud just covered with about an inch of water; but after two sunny days this becomes too dry, and after two days of heavy wet the water is too deep. You may enjoy quite splendid sport from a Monday to a Wednesday and on Saturday fail to see a bird on the ground; in this sort of inquiry the value of a good shikarry is untold.

But to carry out such investigation and to obtain such intimate knowledge of a district new to you, you must give up all attendance on "The Mall;" the pleasant morning and evening drives with the charming ladies of the station must be foregone, and you must expect to be heartily abused for your proceedings. But if, on the other hand, you fall in with the usual station routine habits, and ride round the racecourse in the morning, play rackets and lawn-tennis and saunter among the carriages in the twilight, you will get just as much snipe-shooting as the old married fogies of the station tell you was got last year, and no more and no better.

In districts where there are no roads, or only one road running right through the whole district, probably the neighbouring country can only be learnt by sending your shikarry about in boats. If possible, get transferred to another district. If you cannot arrange this, and while you are obliged to stay in such a zillah, you must make your shikarry search and find out all places which you can reach in a night's row in a boat. You will have to trust your shikarry for this, for it would be waste of time to go about in a boat yourself. Owing to this difficulty about roads, I believe many excellent shooting and hunting localities remain unvisited.

If stationed at Dacca, where really good snipe-shooting is not to be got close at hand, by a little arrangement with sportsmen at Tippera in this sort of way you may manage it. You can ride to Naranigunge after office, drop down to Doudcandee in the night in a boat, and ride to Burkampta or the neighbourhood of Comilla in the early morning, and the Tippera sahibs should be able to show you in September, October, and November very first-rate snipe-shooting. I have done this myself, and have seen it done by others; but it is only a very few men who will take this trouble for snipe-shooting. Except you take trouble and spend money you cannot expect to get real good shooting from any station.

For years the Dacca men, and indeed at times Dacca men alone, worked the hog-hunting of the Tippera district at Doudcandee and south of it, and for years no hog would be speared in those pergunnahs. When out hog-hunting in autumn and early winter you cannot fail to come on plenty of snipe- and duck-ground; and after the jungles have been beaten and the hogs slain, and a few days of rest allowed to the country, you can revisit the marshy and watery places and work the snipe and ducks.

From Calcutta you can get excellent snipe-shooting from August till the end of April, by studying the maps of the surrounding country (and I must impress upon you that there is nothing so permanently useful for all shikar purposes as the possession of the best maps of every place you desire to have sport in), by examining the railroads, rivers, watercourses, roads, and dawk-routes, and marking the damp and marshy places, the stations, police offices, planters' factories, and villages where you may be certain of obtaining the shelter of a shed for one night (all that is required for a Bengal sportsman), or even by marking spots where you can pitch a tent. By arranging to visit these with the aid of rail, buggy, riding-horse, palkee, and boat, it is perfectly astonishing what a choice of good ground you may have.

By rail to the northward, for instance, there commences Bhaga bheel, which in 1850 was about as good snipe-ground as Bengal could show. I understand it is too much shot over now by Calcutta men; near it, however, there are at least eight excellent places seldom resorted to. You could find out all the good ground between Calcutta and Goalundo, and arrange for your camp or tent at many places in the Nuddeah district.

You may work all the ground for fifty miles in a north-westerly direction towards and beyond Hoogly and Burdwan. By the aid of the river and roads you may visit the best bheels between the Botanical Gardens and Tumlook. I have had splendid shooting on the right bank of the river, six hours below Budgebudge, and I have hunted hogs with the Tent Club at Tumlook, having left my judge's seat at Jessore at 3.30 P.M., riding, driving, going in palkee, driving through Calcutta and for some three stages beyond, getting into a boat, and turning up in time at the meet next morning.

In a south and south-easterly direction you will find good snipe- and quail-ground in many places down as far as Diamond Harbour and on both sides of the rail to Port Canning, and I have had glorious sport in this direction with hogs.

To the east is a country which, if well worked by boat, yields excellent snipe-shooting amongst and beyond the saltwater lakes.

In a north-easterly direction near Jessore duck- and snipe-shooting are available, and the sport of both kinds is excellent.

By working the country somewhat in the manner I have pointed out, and with the aid of a good shikarry, through whom you must ascertain if the game is abundant in the right place at the time you desire to work it, and by the assistance of friends among district officials and planters (the best and most hospitable fellows in the world, to whom I have been indebted for a very large share of the best sport in my life), and by a liberal expenditure of money for travelling, you may obtain good sport from every district in Eastern Bengal.

Should you be stationed at those delightful districts where you can find the best snipe-shooting possible within five miles, where you can ride out and

kill your hog and be back at noon, or shoot four or five hog-deer and eight or ten brace of blacks (partridges not natives) and return to lunch, you will be lucky, and should ask some of your friends stationed at places where shikar can only be got at a great distance by labour and expenditure to join you when holidays occur.

Letter No. 4.

Remarks on different districts and on opportunities for absence from official duties.—An officer is bound to travel about his district, and can create leisure by travelling faster than his official attendants.—Your Shikarry should go before.—Budderuddeen's style of report.—Sporting-stations and districts not generally the most sought after by young civilians.—A friend's remarks on Noakholly.

Tippera is as good a district for snipe-shooting as any I was ever stationed at. Very large bags can be made close to the station of Noakholly, and on the beautiful churs between it and the great Megna river. From Chittagong excellent shooting is to be found close to the station and on the sea-shore near Aleshur flagstaff, and in almost every pergunnah and at the foot of the hills: Rajshahye, Mymensing, Maldah, and nearly every other zillah yields good snipe-shooting. But from Backergunge and Dacca Sudder stations you must go to a distance before you will get fair snipe-shooting. In both these districts, if you know the places and the way to get at them, abundant sport can be got, but you must journey several hours by boat in autumn. After Christmas in Dacca you may cross the country on horseback.

Travelling by night in boats or palkee is easy and comfortable, and when roads are good you can drive long distances by moonlight; for instance, I used to shoot over all the country near Zaroorgunge, 40 miles from Chittagong, driving there at night in a buggy. I used to shoot over Panch Tikree bheel, one of the very best places for every kind of sport in Mymensing, by riding through the Bhowal jungle at night. Some people said it was a tempting of Providence as tigers abounded, but a more delicious moonlight ride it is not easy to conceive. All these ways of economizing time and getting over distances have to be observed by a Government officer, whose official labours afford him but scant leisure for the proper pursuit of the ever enjoyable and health-giving recreation of sport. As a rule, I endeavoured to spend every official holiday, whether Hindoo or Mahommedan, Christian or Pagan, in the enjoyment of some sport or other, and by judicious arrangement of official work an extra day could be often obtained. For instance, suppose Monday and Tuesday to be Hindoo holidays, Saturday might be stolen and office "very occasionally" closed at 3 P.M. on Friday. With a horse ready saddled at the cutcherry door, and two or three more each

stationed at every eight miles, and at the end of these a palkee or a boat, you might journey rapidly on till Saturday morning to your camp or place of meeting. On Tuesday afternoon, after a long morning's hunt of some sort, you would start on the return journey and be duly present at your desk on Wednesday at 11 A.M. In this way I have enjoyed three continuous days of shikar at least once or twice every season, especially during the Christmas holidays.

It is a necessary and imperative duty that an officer should constantly visit every part of his district, and hold his office for a time in such places. It takes long for the amlah, the clerks, the vakeels and the suitors, the police, the pffs., the criminals and their guards to reach the spots where the huzool intends to stay for, say, a week. If such place should be, say, thirty miles from headquarters, the whole establishment could not possibly be put down at the appointed spot in three days. If you were to ride or get over to the place during the first night by palkee or boat travelling and riding and driving, you would have at least three days to prove the value of the inquiries made by, and the information gained from, your shikarry, who would have scouted out the whole neighbourhood for a week or two before your arrival.

I can remember with the greatest of pleasure the eagerness with which, after a little sleep during the last few hours of darkness, and during that delicious petty meal, the chota hazari, in camp at early daybreak, I have listened many a time and oft to Budderuddeen's report. How that in two places tigers had killed a day and two days before; that there was a deal of tree-jungle difficult to beat, or that the beasts lived near impenetrable moist bheels, bordered by quicksands and morass, across which no elephant could pass, and out of which they must be kept; or that the bheel in the centre of the valley was full of ducks and its borders swarmed with hog-deer, and that there were a few large hogs where the rushes were thickest, khyah partridge in the rose-bushes, and floriken in the dry grass; that a large herd of buffaloes came nightly near the crops, but disappeared into the thick jungle when the sun got high; that the ground was fine for pig-sticking, but full of hidden cut drains for irrigation; and so on. I look back to the consultations held immediately with, most likely, the friendly planter who had agreed to meet me at this camp, and the civilian officer from a neighbouring bad station, where no handy shikar was to be got, as to whether we should first attack the tigers, or go pig-sticking, or on a general shooting-expedition; and generally, if my recollection is correct, the vote was for going for the tigers.

Occasionally while dubitating, a villager would come with tears to relate how his best milch cow had just been carried off; and such news at once decided the matter.

But at other times we used to hear that the tigers had just been harassed by a native shikarry; that no kill had been heard of lately; that the ducks had been disturbed by some men with a gun; or that no hogs could be

marked in rideable ground. I think often of the way we were constantly disappointed and at times agreeably surprised, on the days when ill luck prevailed or on those when every thing turned out well. Taking the good luck with the bad, those periods of camp and sport, for two or three days at a time, may be reckoned as some of the most enjoyable in one's lifetime.

Besides working up the country far and near in somewhat of the manner I have pointed out, when it is necessary to act solely on your own account you will, of course, try and gain all knowledge and shikar information you can from seniors who are successful sportsmen themselves; and, if possible, you will try to be stationed for your first appointment at some good place where there is an experienced shikarry-judge or collector, noted for keenness and great success, and who would be likely to lead you in the flowery paths of shikar which you will wish to follow through your Indian life. The stations which are most sought after in Eastern Bengal are not, as a rule, the best for sport; the charms of good society, the salubrity of the place, and the character of the doctor—stations with good racecourses, racket-courts, and billiard-rooms, and where balls and dinner-parties are common—are most in request. Probably you will find it easy to get appointed at first, at any rate, to zillahs where hard work tempered with good shikar is more to be thought of than large parties and well-dressed assemblies after sunset. In my own case I owed much of my sport to the fact that I always applied for or volunteered for places where the sport was best and the usual desired advantages least promising. When first I went to Noakholly, a friend wrote to me saying that, after long inquiry, he had at last met a man who knew a little about the place, and described it as a beastly mudbank on the Megna river, where there was no society and no doctor, where they made bad salt, and stuck pigs and shot tigers; and his description at that time was not bad. Since then the small district has been made into a zillah. I believe there is now a judge there, and a collector and a doctor. I know the Government salt manufacture has disappeared, and I suspect that with it the best of the hunting and sporting must have disappeared too.

But there must still be splendid snipe-shooting, tigers must still be found in the Megna churs, Siddhee and other islands cannot have been denuded of hogs, the velvety grassland must still be the best galloping-ground in India, and jungle-fowl must still abound in the hills between Comilla and the Fenny river. I wonder if these places are all worked up for shikar, or any of them, as they were in my day! If they are not, if they have long been left unhunted, the better chance for you if you should be appointed to Tippera, Noakholly, or Chittagong. If I am still alive I shall be delighted to give you such information as memory and a diary can supply.

LETTER No. 5.—*SNIPE-SHOOTING.*

Sport with Snipe. Kinds of Snipe. Seasons for the Sport.—Sport not likely to fail, though cultivation may increase.—Time of day for Snipe-shooting.—Avoid strong drink.—Change your suit as soon as shooting ends.—Large bags of Snipe in Tippera.—Bad fever from Snipe-shooting.—September sport.—Snipe-ground of Noakholly.—Nice uncultivated spots for sport.

THE first sport which will be certain to be offered to you will be snipe-shooting; and very splendid sport is Bengal snipe-shooting when good. You can enjoy it from almost any station with less trouble and expense than any other kind of sport I know.

There are four kinds of snipe in Eastern Bengal:—

1st. The common English or fantail snipe (*Scolopax gallinago*).

2nd. The pintail snipe (*Scolopax stenura* or *sthenura*).

3rd. The jack snipe (*Scolopax gallinula*).

4th. The painted snipe (*Rhynchæa bengalensis*).

The pintail snipe differs from the fantail or common snipe chiefly in having six or more peculiar narrow feathers on each side of its tail; it is darker too under the wings, and has a shorter and slightly different bill. I am not going to enter into a detailed discussion as to the differences of these two species. Before the days of Jerdon and Hume hardly one sportsman in ten knew that there was any difference at all, and, so far as sport is concerned, you need not trouble yourself about the matter. Just shoot them both and cook them both in exactly the same way. In these pages the word "snipe" may be understood to apply to both birds.

There are several kinds of snipe mentioned in Indian ornithology, and I always studied ornithology since I was a boy. But I never had the luck to meet with any kinds but those just mentioned, neither in England nor Bengal, Bombay, or Ceylon; and I never met with any one in Eastern Bengal who had killed or seen one, except Jerdon and Hume. I never saw one in the flesh or out of a collection.

You may shoot snipe nearly all the year round, and certainly during all the season that it is healthy for you to go into the marshes or swamps. I have observed a snipe at Tippera as early as the 4th August. Tom Pitts, the well-known huntsman of the Calcutta hounds, said he always managed to get some near Dum Dum or Cox's Bungalow on the 12th August. I have twice made good bags in the first week of May, both times in borudhân-khets. I cannot remember ever having seen a snipe in India in June or July, though I often spent many days in those months in boats in jheels where there was no reason why the birds should not have nested. The painted snipe breeds in Eastern Bengal.

I believe snipe-shooting will last, and be as good as ever, as long as the

British dominion extends over Bengal, and most probably very much longer. The bird does no harm. It is suited to the nature of the soil and country of Eastern Bengal, which can never be thoroughly drained *. The bird is hard to hit flying and difficult to find sitting. Native shikarries do not find it pay to shoot snipe; there is little flesh on its bones—far better to kill a large heron or shelbreaking ibis for the Mahommedan family than the poor little squeaking Ishnaip. It pays well to net them if there are sahibs to buy them; but netting will not exterminate these delicious game birds.

Ordinarily the best months for shooting are September and October, but the character of the sport and the way of working it alters with the seasons. From the 15th November to the 15th February, in the lovely cold season of Bengal, you should shoot them in the middle of the day. They sleep in the open fields all the day at that season. The sun is generally shining and the wind gentle. The birds rise close and fly quietly. The absence of heat allows you to walk freshly and hold straight for hours. If your official duties allow you to do so, shoot your winter snipe between 10 A.M. and 4.30 P.M. But beware of the climate and its deadly chills. Beware of beer, brandy, and all strong drink, even under a winter's sun in a Bengal jheel; change your wet clothes when shooting is over, on the spot, before you enter your buggy or mount your horse to return home. Ride or drive home warm and dry, as a rule, or you will not shoot snipe many winters through in Eastern Bengal. With due regard to clothing and temperance in liquor, I consider snipe-shooting a very healthy sport. I never was the worse for it but once, and then I lost the hair from my head; I nearly died. It came about in this wise :—The snipe-shooting at Tippera was at its very best, and I had one keen companion, my superior, the magistrate, who was as hard as nails, but temperate and careful too. The bags that we used to make! We got our powder, Curtis and Harvey's best, in barrels, and our wadding and caps (for it was in the days of muzzle-loaders) wholesale from England. We often killed above eighty couple of snipe between daybreak and 10.30 A.M. Once we killed eighty-six couple—at least we brought home eighty-six couple. How many couple the magistrate left in the rice I cannot say. He cried to me, "What are you stopping for?" I said, "I have fourteen birds down, and shall not shoot on till I pick up at least seven." "Oh, never stop! let the chuprasseis pick them up; go on, go on!" So he went on, and I picked up most of my birds. But on one of these days we had agreed to shoot up to a certain spot, where our horses were to meet us and take us about eight miles to the station. We had not remembered that there was a deep nullah at the side of the road where the horses stood, and which we had to cross. Official business was heavy; we had no time to go round, so we swam the nullah, and

* Cultivation and agriculture, which banish most kinds of game, agree with snipe and snipe-shooting; very often the best rice-lands are the best snipe-shooting places in the district.

had to ride home in wet clothes. After bathing and breakfast, I had to walk half a mile to office. It rained, and I got damp. At 5.30 P.M. I left office, saying to the magistrate that I felt chilly. He recommended a brisk walk, so off we set and walked to Mynamutty, four and a half miles distant. As we turned homeward it began to rain again, and I got wet a third time. This brought on a bad fever. An ignorant doctor mismanaged me, and I very nearly joined the majority.

In September, when it is very hot and damp, it is not only much more healthy to shoot snipe in the early morning or in the afternoon than to toil through the hottest part of the day, but you shoot better and make better bags. I remember, many years ago, before railways were introduced, a party of three of us went to have a day's snipe-shooting in Bhaga bheel—now so easily got at from Calcutta, but then it took us a long buggy-drive from Calcutta and steady rowing in a boat all night and far into the day before we reached the spot. We started to shoot after breakfast, having arranged that a good tiffin should be brought to us at the furthest point we were to shoot to. Though birds were plentiful, the walking was laborious; constantly sinking to the knee, an effort was required to bring the foot out. Occasionally one sunk in with both feet to above the knees; then one had to be dragged out by two bearers. The sun was fearfully hot in a cloudless sky; there was no wind. We reached the spot for luncheon long before luncheon reached us, and we sat under the palm trees very thirsty. One of my companions was a fair shot, the other decidedly a bad one. We had bagged forty-seven couple of snipe.

The lunch was good, and the cool pale ale delicious. Pale ale never agreed with me; but I drank nearly a bottle, and my friends more than a bottle each. On the way back birds were more numerous than before and the firing was hot; but our bag at the end was some two or three couple short of sixty brace, and, moreover, we were very tired and done up; and I am convinced that, could we have timed the sport, for the same number of hours beginning at 6 A.M., and omitting the beer, we should have doubled the bag; and after reaching our boats we could have bathed and enjoyed a cool lunch and a siesta afterwards, and been far more comfortable than we were according to the arrangements we followed.

The ground in which snipe are found, as a rule, in the early months of the sport is such as supplies abundance of food, and must be tolerably soft and not deeply covered with water. The young green rice-crop is a favourite resort, and in many places you shoot in nothing else; but fallow or uncultivated ground, with short grass and weeds in it, with about one inch of water, and mud that lets your foot into it for about two inches more, is a still better place to find snipe in. Such spots are often interspersed among the rice-khets, especially as you go far towards the east from Calcutta.

In some zillahs—Noakholly, for instance—you find large grassy plains on

the banks of large rivers, which have not been cultivated, but have short grass on them slightly impregnated with salt. The shooting on these churs in October in calm weather is delightful; birds are plentiful, and walking easy. I used to enjoy the snipe-shooting about Hingootea and Shook churs in the Doorga-Poojah holidays more than in any other place. But it was dependent on weather. Birds were often exceedingly wild and unapproachable. After two days of settled weather, on ground only just covered with water and soft, snipe were tame and shooting easy; but these churs were liable to be inundated; and if the water got two or three inches deeper, or if the wind blew tempestuously, the birds would leave the entire neighbourhood of such lands till the ground became fit again for them. On these plains every sort of wading-bird was generally to be found. I observed that these were much less affected by the weather; they accommodated themselves to circumstances, but the snipe went elsewhere.

In some places there are peculiar swamps which never seem to be long under deep water, and which never get dry, even in April and May, and remain always uncultivated. In such places you may find snipe abundant from the middle of August to the middle of April. When you come to know of such nice spots, mark them well in your memory; do not tell everybody else about them, or you will find them poached. A good shikarry often finds out a number of such places not known to the generality of sportsmen.

Letter No. 6.

Ground varies with inundations and tides.—Place very near Calcutta only suitable for Snipe after spring-tides.—Good place towards the Soonderbunds. Rice-fields.—Remarks as to shooting in the morning or evening, or in the middle of the day.—A hot afternoon.

Much of the low-lying country in Eastern Bengal is subject to overflow by the spring-tides in September and October. The snipe-shooting in many places is affected by this petty inundation. There was a place very close to Calcutta—I dare say it is built over now—where, over a small area, a very nice afternoon's sport could be got at the right time. An officer in Fort William was constantly asking me to show him some shooting, and promised not to disclose the place; so I took him there, and we had pleasant sport for about two hours, shooting fourteen couple. His messmates, however, persuaded him to take them to the same place, and they found nothing. Shortly afterwards he got me to take him out again, and I took him to the same place, and we had fair sport. He then told me that it was very odd, but he had been here

in the meantime and found no snipe. I suggested that perhaps some other persons also had been poaching on my preserves. The real fact was that the ground was only fit for snipe on the third and fourth days after the high spring-tide in the river; on other days it was too dry.

There was another place where I used to get charming sport towards the Soonderbunds. I never knew its name. After dinner I used to drive to my boat, and sleep in it during the journey. Next morning I was at the spot. It was a large muddy plain, through which ran several small tidal ditches. During low water I could wander about the plain and shoot snipe, and at times plover, in the short herbage and in a short-growing bush with a blue flower—the leaf resembled holly and was prickly, and the flower was like a periwinkle. I believe the name of the plant was *Justicia spinosa*. When the tide came in the snipe left the lowland and came in numbers to the few high island-like spots which remained uncovered with water, and here I used to wait for them and shoot numbers. After the river fell, in the cold season, the place became too dry.

The generality of early snipe-shooting is got in rice-fields and in the uncultivated spots interspersed among them, and in places where, although the water may be a foot deep and more, yet the matted long rice allows the snipe to wade and settle on the crop without getting into too deep water. The first plunge into this deep water, about sunrise, near November, often startles one with its coldness.

I have said that, in quite the cold season, you should shoot snipe in the middle of the day. It is quite different, however, in September and March, when the sun has great power, and too much fatigue and exposure in the marshes may induce fever. It is generally allowed that at these seasons you should shoot either in the morning or in the afternoon. There has been much dispute as to whether it is best to shoot in the morning or the afternoon. Hume says that it is a sad mistake, and spoils sport, to go out in the morning. I entirely disagree with him. His argument is that the birds are then wild, get up in whisps, and may leave the place altogether. Other authorities agree with him. As to the shooting after 10.30 A.M., I put that out of the question. You certainly find the birds easier to shoot; and if your official duties will allow you to spare the time, by all means shoot in the middle of the day, if it is not too hot for health. But where the choice lies between a few hours in the early morning and a few before dark, I very greatly prefer to go out early. The birds have probably been feeding all night and like their feeding-ground, and have not been disturbed. You find them easily in the early morning, when some are generally flying about, and direct you where to begin at once. There are no cattle tethered on those nice uncultivated spots which the snipe love most, and no boys to shout at the trespassing cows and frighten away the snipe. Birds lie closer and you miss fewer shots as the sun gets higher. If you get into a place where the snipe are very numerous, you can shoot it out.

Your time is your own; you have commenced no case which must be finished —no mooktear insists on bothering you and detaining you in office. But if you arrange to shoot in the afternoon, you will often find yourself hampered as to time in office, and therefore late on the snipe-ground. The birds have been hidden during the heat of the day, and it may be long before you hit them off. Boys will be tending tethered and untethered cattle, and shouting and playing on the uncultivated spots where you ought to have found most birds. Snipe get wilder as the sun goes lower, and often, just as you get right into the thick of them, darkness comes on. However, you can easily try both plans and take your choice.

I was not always so careful as to the hours for shooting. Once I went with a companion to shoot at the foot of the Mynamutty hills in Tippera, and a place that absolutely swarmed with snipe, but no air reached it. The sun poured fiercely down in the second week of September, and the thick sticky mud formed as difficult stuff to walk through as I ever shot in. The heat was terribly oppressive. It was in the days of muzzle-loaders, and we each had two. After ten minutes' or a quarter of an hour's fusillade, the guns got so hot that we were afraid to put powder into them; so we handed them over to the beaters, and struggled to the shade of the village palm trees. The village was full of ripe pine-apples, costing about a penny each, so we ate pine-apples and then went at the snipe again; and this we continued to do till we were exhausted by the hard walking and heat. We killed a great number of birds, but my companion caught a very bad fever. I often afterwards shot over this place on cool mornings with no bad result. After early November you must seek snipe in other places than the cultivated rice-fields; these dry up, and snipe revisit them no more till next season. You will now find them most plentiful on the borders of the water in the centre of jheels. If you know of quiet undisturbed jheels, the outer circle of which is high grass, such as should hold hog and hog-deer and partridges, with an inner circle of herbage growing in very shallow water, and with a centre of lotus-covered deep water, there you will probably find teal and ducks among the lotuses and snipe all round the water's edge. But sometimes these places are deserted at midday. I have seen the snipe coming in numbers before sunset, and shot them in early morning, and found that they had all gone by 10 A.M. At such times I have often found them among the stumps of burnt grass and in the driest ground. I believe, too, that great quantities of snipe retire to the heavy forest jungles for shade and quiet during the heat of the day.

Letter No. 7.

Snipe in the spring: in Borudhān: in deep water covered with floating weed, from boats or canoes.—Shoot in the morning from east to west, in the afternoon from west to east.—Charges of powder and shot.—Clothes for Bengal Snipe-shooting. Liquor to be drunk.—Many Snipe caught by Shikarries, and kept alive till sold, but not equal to Snipe which have been shot.—Different ways of cooking Snipe.—Jack Snipe.—Painted Snipe. I propose to vary details in these letters by writing sometimes of Bird-shooting and sometimes of Tiger, and then by introducing Hog-hunting before returning to Tigers, and so on.

In March and April snipe resort to the borders of large tanks and ponds, and are very tame and easily shot there. In the station of Comilla, in Tippera, at the commencement of the hot weather, there were always snipe round the beautiful tanks with which that pleasant place abounds. We looked on them as pets, and never shot at them.

In many parts of Bengal a crop of rice, known as borudhān, is grown, which is planted out in lands that only begin to get dry in February and March, and which, for most part of the year, are under deep water. When the green crop is about ten inches high, and the mud soft and scarcely covered with water, snipe may be found in such places in numbers, and ducks and all sorts of waders also. I have constantly made large bags in these borudhān-khets late in the season, when I knew of no other place scarcely where the bird could be found abundantly.

In some extensive bheels, where deep water is to be found all the year round, there is a floating weed which covers large patches of water, and in March possesses a great attraction for snipe. I suppose they find plentiful enticing food in the shape of small worms or insects. Most excellent shooting is to be got when you come across a bheel of this kind. My *modus operandi* in the Narail subdivision of Jessore was as follows:—

I got two tāl-tree canoes, as no other boats were to be found in these bheels, and fastened them together with bamboos, and made myself as comfortable as I could, sitting with one leg in each canoe. One is obliged to tie two canoes together, as it is impossible to move from the exact perpendicular in a single canoe without upsetting it. Next I got two little boys out of the fishing-village—little creatures who were almost amphibious, and equally happy in the water or in a boat. One boatman with a long pole came in my double vessel, and two attendants accompanied in separate canoes. When we came to the right sort of patch of floating weed, I went to the right side of it, and the boys, on their hands and knees, struggling and swimming, crawled over it, putting up snipe in swarms. The birds only flew to other similar patches, and the sport was most brilliant and attended with no fatigue. I always made good bags; but I missed many shots, as it is difficult to shoot in a sitting posture in such canoes, and you can only fire successfully to the left front.

It was like shooting on elephants from the guddy when you cannot obtain a howdah. I believe this kind of snipe-shooting is to be got in the early hot season in some of the Sylhet bheels and in a few other places. I never met with it except in a few bheels between Jessore and Furreedpore. Had I been able to visit such places for several seasons I should certainly have built a flat-bottomed boat for the purpose, or have had some boat on which one could stand and turn taken to the bheel. Few men of my acquaintance seem to have met with this peculiarly nice kind of snipe-shooting. The snipe could not be got up except by the boys. When shot, the men behind picked up the birds, for doing which a landing-net was most useful.

In shooting snipe in the morning or afternoon, you should always arrange your beat so as to avoid having the sun in your eyes. In the morning, begin at the eastern verge of your ground and shoot to the westward; in the afternoon you should do exactly the reverse. A pair of spectacles with plain but slightly tinted glasses will enable you to shoot snipe even when they fly straight towards the sun. In great glare, tinted spectacles afford wonderful relief to the eye and brain. Coming home from tiger-shooting in March, I have put them on and felt much refreshed, and as if the sun had retired behind a cloud.

I do not consider snipe hard to shoot. There is a knack in it which, if you are naturally a fair shot, you will soon catch. Practice is the great thing, and with much practice probably you will find the shooting quite easy. I have known very many men in India who could shoot snipe well, but who were inferior shots at other game. I look on a black partridge as one of the easiest birds to shoot, but I have seen men miss them disgracefully; and as for jungle-fowl in the Tippera hill-jungles, I have known men who thought themselves fair snipe-shots fire all day and never bag a single jungle-cock. Sportsmen have their own ideas as to charges of powder and sizes of shot. I always shot, for general purposes, with three and a quarter drams of powder and one ounce and one eighth of No. 8 shot for breech-loaders. If I went out solely for snipe I reduced the charge to three drams of powder and an ounce of shot, or a little less. I did not find small charges answer.

But Hume recommends the following plan:—"Put one drachm of powder in the cartridge, and ram lightly down a thin wad; then fill the cartridge with clean dry sawdust, tightly rammed in with a thin cardboard wad. On this place half an ounce of No. 10 or dust shot. Put in the usual cardboard wad, and close the cartridge in the usual manner. Up to thirty or forty yards they will kill snipe and quail as well as full cartridges." I did not know of this plan when in India; but I tried it with No. 8 shot at larks in Northamptonshire in snow-time, and did not like it at all. In India I experimented with small charges in cartridges, and did not find it answer to reduce charges below two and a half drams of powder and seven eighths of shot; and, practically, I used the charges first mentioned above. I never used shot less than No. 8.

Snipe often are wild, and require to be shot at longish distances; and No. 8 will knock over a teal if within fair distance.

For snipe-shooting you should wear ordinary English lace-boots; a gaiter of some light cloth material, not leather; trousers loose above and tight below the knee, buttoning above the ankle, and made of American cotton cloth, called in Bengalee "marking" kupra. The jacket should be of the same material, reaching a little below the hips, fitting loosely, with at least four pockets. You should wear a light banian under a cotton shirt. Your hat must be a "solah topee," and it should have a curtain behind to protect the back of the neck. Some people recommend flannel clothes, but these shrink and tear and are useless for hard shooting. When shooting is over, you should instantly take off all your wet and soaking garments, and put on a fresh undersuit and blue or white flannel trousers and jacket to go home in. If it is windy, in spite of the heat you will find an overcoat a good thing after having been bathed in perspiration for hours. Nearly all the sportsmen of my acquaintance adhered to the above rules for the most part. Some men also think it right to wear a native cummerbund, or one made of tusser silk, round the waist. A coolie or servant with a light wicker stool ("morah") on his head makes a convenient arrangement. The inverted morah holds your dry clothes and spare ammunition, and affords a dry seat when you want to sit down or change your clothes.

Snipe-shooting is thirsty work, and few men can walk in a soft muddy jheel for long without requiring something to drink. The less you drink the better; but avoid spirits, and strong spirits and water, wine and beer. I trained myself, though by no means a teetotaller, to drink pure water; this was carried for me in two stone bottles, inserted in a case made with a padding of cotton-wool, and carried on a bearer's shoulder by a strap; the wadded cover was always wetted, and thus the water kept cool. I stuck to this from 1850 to the end of my Indian experiences. Some men take tea, and a friend of mine used always to have his tea carried in the sunshine "to keep it warm." Some men like weak cocoa, slightly sweetened, and it is refreshing. Some take coffee, very many weak brandy and water, or brandy and soda. My advice is, avoid brandy and beer before sundown; after sundown a deep draught of pale ale is truly delicious. I persuaded my assistants when pig-sticking or shooting at Noakholly to abstain from anything strong till sport was over. As we approached the camp, the khitmutgar, who was on the look out, used to meet us with a large tankard of the foaming amber liquid, and the young chaps christened it "Love's young dream." After the day is over the best drink is light claret, and if you are very thirsty and much exhausted you had better mingle water with your claret. All the successful healthy sportsmen I knew in India were exceedingly temperate on shikar expeditions; and many and many a friend of mine suffered from free drinking of beer and spirits after exposure to the sun or during it.

Near Calcutta, especially on the Howrah side of the river, immense

quantities of snipe are caught by shikarries in nets for sale in the bazaar. These men operate from sunset to sunrise. The birds have their eyelids generally sewn up and are kept alive and starving till bought; this preserves them from getting rotten, but spoils them for the table. Caught snipe cannot be compared with snipe freshly shot. These shikarries look on these snipe-grounds as their private property, and my own shikarry, who was sent by me to report on these jheels, was twice assaulted. Of course they dared not interfere with a European with a loaded gun in his hand, but some Bengalee epithets, very far from polite or decent, were constantly hissed at me.

In some places tremendous bags can be made. The best zillahs, as far as I was concerned, for sport were Tippera and Noakholly. Two of us often topped the eighty couple, and I have nearly every season, when in good ground, shot above fifty couple to my own gun in about four hours. We used to consider twelve couple to a gun as an average fair sport, and any less number poor sport.

When you come home with your snipe-sticks filled, and two or three birds in every loop, after sending presents to all friends in the station, you ask yourself what to do with the surplus. In addition to the ordinary snipe, let me tell you that snipe-pie, trail-toast, trail-omelette, and potted snipe are all delicious, and that Hindoo bearers will eat snipe; and if after shooting a certain number you allow your Mahommedan attendants to cut the throats of the others you may shoot, all the Mussulman servants will cook and eat them joyfully.

I have written a long screed on this little bird, but after all my advice may be condensed into very few words:—make your shikarry find out and report where snipe most abound; hold straight; be temperate; change your clothes as soon as you cease to shoot. Then I hope you may healthily enjoy this fine sport for a quarter of a century.

The jack snipe is a delicious little bird, thinly scattered over Bengal: you will often meet with him; ruthlessly slay and eat him. He is irregular in his habits, and I can give little information about him.

The painted snipe is useless both for sport and for the table. Indeed he is not a snipe at all. A few are shot just to make up a bag, or because the females are handsome. The male is a plainish bird, but the female is richly coloured. Most new-comers regard the brightest-coloured bird as the male; I found out that it was not so before the writings of Jerdon and Hume were published. My cook's mate was one day playing with an egg, and I asked him where he got it, and he said he got it inside a painted snipe which I had shot that morning: presently I recollected that I had only shot two painters, and that I thought they were males. The boy stuck to his story; so I went out again in the afternoon and shot several of both sexes, and thus ascertained that the richly coloured and largest bird was the female, and the plain

bird the male. There are other birds known to ornithologists which are similarly coloured as to the sexes.

As latterly my letters have been rather dry, inasmuch as they contained little else than instruction and information for your guidance, in my next I will give an account of a good day's sport from the howdah; and after that digression I will enter into the discussion of the grand sport of hog-hunting, to which I devoted most of my spare time in India, and which, when it was to be got, threw all other sports into the shade, tiger-shooting not by any means excepted.

LETTER No 8.—*GOOD SPORT ON QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.*

A good day's sport on the Queen's Birthday.—A bheel at the foot of the Shooshung Hills.—Difficulties of reaching an out-of-the-way place.—The Rajah of Shooshung.—The weather.—Shikarry's report.—Rajah shoots a noisy Hog.—Buffalo-shooting.

To the north of the station of Mymensing, some thirty miles as the crow flies, and at the base of the Shooshung Hills, is a pergunnah known as Nazirpore bheel. This I knew to be one of the very best places for shikar in the district, if hunted up late in the season, just before the early rains set in. From June to February it was generally too wet and too thickly covered with green grass and dense jungle for sport. Here for half a year all the zemindars of the zillah used to turn out their elephants loose to feed day and night on the wet "dull grass." A few weeks in these bheels made an elephant fat and round. I had heard a great deal about the place from my mahouts, and had long desired to try it.

But the place was difficult of access and bad for camping at; no hath (market) near for the men; there was no road to it, and three very awkward rivers had to be crossed, and this could only be done by previous arrangements for boats, as there were no regular ferries. For these reasons the place had not been visited by any sahibs for many years. I at last arranged to have a day there on that universal holiday, the 24th May. None of the other residents at the station could accompany me, so I went alone. I closed my office at 1 P.M. on the day before the Queen's birthday, and started on horseback from the cutcherry door. I had laid a dawk of five riding horses, and had marked the villages and crossings of the rivers from the Government maps, and rode with compass in my pocket and note-book to record bearings.

Budderuddeen Shikarry had gone ahead nearly a week before. My lightest camping arrangement of tent and pāls for servants, the howdah and

guns well protected with waterproof coverings, were sent on two days before, on nine elephants; no bullock-carts could have been used.

The Rajah of Shooshung was to meet me on the morning of the 24th May, at my camp, and to bring two elephants with him.

This Rajah was the representative of a once powerful Hindoo family, which had gradually become impoverished through family quarrels and the peculations of underlings, managers, naibs, and such-like retainers, who, though at first poor, gradually possessed themselves, bit by bit, of the landed property, and eventually became owners of the estate of the family, in connection with which they had started in life in positions little better than those of slaves. The Rajah was a young man of good reputation, of exceedingly prepossessing manners, and had long been friendly with me.

The weather had been hot and windy for some days, and it was evident that the rains were about to burst forth. It seemed just a chance if I should not be stopped by deluges from the clouds and swollen rivers. However luck stood kindly by me on this occasion, and I arrived at camp before sunset. A most lovely wild sunset, such as is only to be seen in a hilly country when grand masses of dark clouds are accumulating in the western sky.

The first thing to be done was to dine, and the second to hear Budderuddeen's report. He gave a glowing account of the place as a sporting-ground. There was an abundance of every possible kind of game. Traces of tigers in every direction. At the same time he had failed positively to harbour a tiger, and could tell of no fresh kill. The tigers fed as much on deer, hogs, and buffaloes, as on tame cattle belonging to the villagers, and there was the usual dislike which cowherds have of telling tales on tigers, whose relatives would retaliate by killing their cattle. Footmarks of tigers I should find by each muddy nullah. Deer of all kinds were abundant. Bears were said to be in the rosebush jungles. There was a herd of nine cow buffaloes and one very fine bull to the westward. The heavy grass-jungle was well burnt, and there was plenty of grass about two feet high. Several large pools with waterfowl and wading birds, and many patches of dense tree-jungle, mostly thorny and very hard to beat. The bheel lay at the foot of the hills, which were covered with forest, into which, if an animal retreated, pursuit would be futile. Out of this forest in the early morning came deer, peafowl and jungle-fowl. After due consideration of all this news I decided to start as early as possible next morning, and to go westward, the chief reason for this probably being that the early sun would not be in our eyes.

The morning was fine though threatening; I made an early start, and was joined soon by the Rajah. The first excitement was caused by my mahout Sowdaugor, who jumped off my elephant, and captured a large and beautiful specimen of that dangerous viper, *Daboia Russellii*, the "tic polonga" of Ceylon. I will not touch on Sowdaugor's foolish mania for catching snakes

now, but merely remark that I regarded it as a good omen, a similar capture of a dangerous snake having before this occurred at the beginning of a lucky day.

We beat some nice low grass; there were a few black partridges and some khyah partridges, generally called by sportsmen here "chickore." Hares and hog-deer were running about. I spent no time with these, but got to a nice spot near some water that looked likely. Near this was an unbeatable patch of tree-jungle, thick and extensive enough for tigers and sambhur, here called "gous," and surrounded with splendid cover. This, however, only yielded hogs. The Rajah shot a very large boar, which made a great squealing before it died. This of course was painful to my feelings as a pig-sticker, but the Rajah said he shot it for food for his hillmen, and that no sahibs ever came pig-sticking about this pergunnah.

About this time I got news that the herd of buffaloes were all lying in some mud and grass not far off, and I went northward to get between them and the forest, which was about two miles off. I got fairly near them, when they rose and went off at speed. I managed to hit a cow hard with the Daw-Jacob rifle. My battery this day consisted of three smooth-bores, all 12-bores, and this rifle, which, though not of very large bore, carried a peculiar bullet about two ounces in weight; it had a blunt conical point, and then a belt of about one eighth of an inch, which was larger than the bore, and behind this belt the lead was like a cylinder, and grooved so as to admit of lubrication. This bullet became elongated as it passed through the barrel, and was such a deadly missile that I really believe that no animal which I ever fairly hit in eleven years with it ever escaped; many a miss I made, but if I hit I think I invariably brought the animal to bag.

I did not stop, however, with the cow, but pressed on, best pace, to try and get the bull, with his massive horns. For more than an hour I followed, but he always beat me. It is wonderful how fast buffaloes go through marshy ground. The herd lingered at times in the shelter of patches of heavy grass, and I plugged two more cows with Daw-Jacob. Eventually the bull and the other cows got into the forest, and I do not possess those magnificent horns.

Letter No. 9.

Day's sport continued.—Shoot a Swamp-Deer with remarkable horns.—Return to Camp.—News brought of a Tiger.—Start again.—Arrangements for beating.—Try the shouting tactics, and the Tiger bolts. Is killed.—Wet night in tents.—Wet ride back.—Remarks.

By this time the Rajah was done up with the heat of a May sun and retired. Close to where the bull had entered the hill-forest was a detached

piece of heavy tree-jungle, which I resolved to beat; it held a fine buck gous-deer with good horns. I had the luck to wound him severely at the first shot and he fell before he could get clean out of the thickets, and a ball behind the ear put an end to him. It took long to hoist his huge carcase on to an elephant. I now retraced my way and went back to the wounded cow buffaloes, every one of which had been stopped by the wounds given in the chase of the bull, and I killed the three, their heads were cut off, and by this time the day had become exceedingly hot.

I had not come all that way for buffaloes, for whose pursuit I cared little. There was nothing better, and I shot at partridges and hog-deer on the homeward track; suddenly out of some thatching-grass a deer sprung up. He seemed to me all horns; I had never seen such a head. The first shot out of a smooth-bore smashed his hips and he was easily killed. It was a swamp-deer (*Cervus Duvaucellii*), or Bārah Singah. The usual complement of points for a good deer of this species is twelve, but this deer had twenty points. The head was exhibited in London in 1872, and I give a Plate of it. I was much delighted at this, and reached the tents contented, and thought the day's work was over.

I was superintending the lowering of the deer from the guddy, so that the horns might not be injured, and the howdah-ropes of my elephant were actually loosened, when some hillmen came rushing in stating that a tiger had just carried off the hog which the Rajah had killed in the early morning, and was eating it in that nice jungle! The howdah-ropes were tightened, the men were refreshed with milk, which was plentiful here, I took some coffee which had been got ready, and we were all off again in about as hot a sun as I ever shot in.

When I got to the place I found that the tiger had left the hog and had been marked into that unbeatable patch of tree-jungle which I mentioned just before relating the death of the noisy boar. The carcase of the boar presented an extraordinary sight; the tiger had torn large pieces of flesh right out of the hinder parts by main force, and the muscles were hanging like pieces of white tape; each mouthful must have been nearly twice as big as a cricket-ball. I surveyed the uncompromising patch of jungle mournfully, and saw that it could not possibly be properly beaten, and that a knowing tiger might defy us if he chose to stick to cover. Many of the trees were thick and thorny, and it would have been foolish to have taken a howdah elephant inside. Beyond this patch was a piece of really nice jungle, good cover and easy to beat, and besides this there was nothing else but open plain for a tiger to betake himself to; so I made up my mind to try shouting tactics, which I had often found successful before. A fresh-found tiger may often be made to bolt by shouting once, but he will not do it a second time after he has found out the danger. So I put the line of nine elephants, that is seven of those which I had brought with me and two brought by the Rajah,

REMARKABLE HORNS OF SWAMP DEER.

into order, under the command of Budderuddeen and a very clever jemmadar of chuprassies, with one elephant outside each, and five good beating elephants between them, and directed them to do exactly as I had done when I beat out the tiger for the Earl of G———d the season before, viz., to go as far into the jungle as they could in line, and then to shout and make the utmost possible row. I took up my station between the unbeatable patch of jungle and the nice beatable cover. I was on my favourite elephant, but took another to keep her company, as even the most staunch elephant is generally uneasy and unsteady if placed alone on an occasion like this.

In due time the shouting commenced, and a most unearthly din was indeed made, and very soon a fine tiger bolted across the open space and gave me a nice shot, which, I am sorry to say, I missed disgracefully; but the tiger had gone into the nice easily beaten jungle.

There was no help for it. I blew the horn I always carry in the howdah, and the elephants all came to me. The jungle to be now beaten was in the form of a long isosceles triangle, the apex pointing to the open plain and the base running parallel to the thick tree-jungle from which the tiger had bolted. I felt certain that if I beat towards the apex the tiger would break back and I might lose him in the cover. So I decided to stand where I was, and have him beaten back towards his stronghold, thinking that I surely could not miss him again; and thus the feat was carried out. Very soon I knew by the noise that he was viewed. He came well at me open-mouthed; a well directed shot rolled him over almost within ten yards of me, a second bullet behind the ear killed him, and all was over.

He was a very fine tiger, in the prime of life, and measured ten feet and one inch as he lay before we padded him. Of course I was delighted with the day's sport.

I turned back to camp, and it was well into the afternoon. I had a great deal to do. First to skin the two big deer and the tiger and to see to their heads, and then to prepare for the coming storm. The thunder was growling, the clouds were, as the natives say, like soorma, or powdered antimony. Tent-ropes were fastened firmly to pegs bushed in the ground, a small rampart of earth nearly a foot high was dug and planted round the foot of the khunats of the tent to keep out the rain, guns were oiled, put in their cases and under a waterproof cover in the howdah, which was also put inside the crowded tent, and then to dinner. I will tell you what this consisted of:—Hotch-potch soup from a tin, partridge cutlets, steaks from the tenderest part of the big-horned deer, curried eggs and rice, pint of cool Giesler, and stewed apricots ended the repast (the latter delicacy got from travelling Afghans, and always kept in store as delicious and portable; these apricots in a dried state are procurable generally over all Bengal); a cup of coffee followed, and orders were given for a start home at 3.30 A.M., if possible. The rains set in in stormy wrath. By 3.30 the tempest had begun. We were all on the alert. The khitmutgar

gave me a large cup of coffee, two eggs boiled and mixed together with pepper and salt in a tumbler, and some toast, and I started on my wet ride as soon as I could see. It was a most drenching journey, but the water in the rivers had not risen, and I reached my house quite as soon as I expected. After a bath and breakfast I was in my office seat by 12.20 P.M., and got through a fair day's work by 6 P.M., when the elephants and servants began to appear all wet and wretched.

Thus ended the trip. The day's sport I consider one of the best I ever had in my life. In addition to the egregious miss at the tiger, I believe I made one other mistake. I ought to have tried again and have beaten that thick jungle again to the best of my ability, for I do not think the tiger I killed was the one which had been devouring the hog: when I cut open the body the stomach was empty; now had it been the tiger which had just fed, I should have found the stomach full of pork!

Tigers very often are in company with one or two companions. The jungle was fit to hold several tigers, and might have had in it a rhinoceros; they were not uncommon in this country. It probably held some gous-deer; I had found one in the only heavy jungle tried that morning. Probably there were bears in it; bears were more common hereabouts than in any place I knew. Though the jungle was generally unfit for a man in a howdah to enter, as thick branches might have torn off the howdah and caused accidents, yet it might have been disturbed and shaken up and fired into, and possibly game might have been found. But on the whole it was a most glorious day's sport: the bag was one tiger, one splendid swamp-deer, one gous-deer, two hog-deer, three buffaloes, and some partridges.

LETTER No. 10.

Hog-hunting.—Hog-hunting compared with other sports, and considered only inferior to the best Fox-hunting.—The Bengal Wild Boar. Size. The largest seen by me.—Hogs of different Zillahs.—Various countries for hunting.—The Calcutta Tent Club.—Right number to ride a Hog.—Scarcity of competent Hog-hunters.—Indigo-planters.—Noakholly.—How I arranged with the Zemindars and preserved the country for Hog-hunting.—How my preserves were invaded. How defended from future attack.

HOG-HUNTING, more familiarly called pig-sticking, is the grandest sport you will get in Eastern Bengal. I say this with full knowledge that many men would ask, What about tiger-shooting? In my opinion I put good pig-sticking second only to fox-hunting with the best packs in the English midlands. I have hunted with nearly all the best fox-hounds in England and Scotland, with the stag-hounds on Exmoor, with the Queen's hounds, with numerous packs of harriers; I have ridden wild buffaloes and wild cattle and

THE OLD BLUE BOAR OF TIPPERA.

hog-deer with a gun in place of a spear; I have never stalked a Highland stag, nor killed gour, nor elephants, nor been in America; but I have shot rhinoceros and five kinds of deer with smooth-bore and rifle. I have killed grouse in five Scotch counties, jungle-fowl in Tippera, snipe in India and Ceylon, peafowl, spurfowl, and many kinds of partridges, wild geese, and nearly all kinds of ducks, wild pigeons, and water-fowl; and, after more than forty years' keen pursuit of all these sports, I unhesitatingly declare my choice for hog-hunting next to the best fox-hunting.

There is a rapture and delight in the pace, which must be the best your horse can go; an excitement in the struggle for first spear; a satisfaction in the combat with a plucky well-grown boar, only to be equalled by a fast forty minutes with a scent without a check, when well mounted and able to hold your own over the splendid pastures of Market Harborough and Melton.

You will probably read a deal about tiger-shooting in these letters. A really good day with luck and fighting tigers is glorious sport I allow; but how often do you get it? How many days of uninteresting toil are you not forced to undergo! How much disappointment and ill-luck before you secure your trophies! No, hog-hunting to me beats tiger-shooting hollow.

The Bengal wild boar is found all over Eastern Bengal, but varies much in size and character in different zillahs. One of the largest I ever rode was just under thirty-eight inches high, properly measured. That is, a spear was stuck into the ground touching his withers, the fore leg was held straight out and another spear stuck into the ground at his heel, and the space between the two spear-shafts was about 37⅞ inches *. My notes record the measurement of no larger hog. This one was killed on the 2nd of June, 1850, in the churs on the Moorshedabad side of the Ganges below Pubna. It was one of the hottest days that I went hog-hunting on. We had killed four fine hogs that morning, and one of the party came to me and said it was so hot that he could stay out no longer, but that in yonder grass was the very biggest boar that was ever seen, bigger than the biggest seen or killed at the famous pig-sticking party lately given by Mr. Torrens of the Bengal Civil Service, at which no less than sixty elephants belonging to the Nawab of Moorshedabad had been put into line. My horse was quite done, so I said if any one would lend me a horse I would kill this monster. A young indigo-planter said he would lend me a grey factory horse if I would be responsible; I agreed and mounted. It was a nice horse, rather unmade, but the reins were very thin and hard and cut my hands, as he had a hard mouth and would not easily answer the rein. We beat the jungle and four fine hogs broke at once—among them the monster: in leaving the jungle he caught sight of one of the party and went straight at him. J. tried to spear him properly, but the hog knocked the spear into his face and nearly stunned him. J. came galloping entreating me to kill the hog who had blinded him. I soon got on terms

* If a tape had been pressed close to the body, as is done by some measurers, this boar would have measured fully 42 inches.

with the hog, and killed him in two charges, but the horse was so difficult to steer and manage that he got cut in the stifle. Both the planter and the horse got all right after medical treatment.

When I reached the bungalow and told about the size of the hog which was being brought in on a cart, several bets were offered as to his height. Mr. Cockburn (of whom I have much to write, and who was my tutor in the science and the best pig-sticker I ever met) backed the tusks of the hog he had speared that morning; other bets were that he was not as high as the table, and not higher than the table, not three feet high. I took all the bets; but lost the one as to the tusks. Cockburn's hog had splendid thick, long, and perfect tusks, mine had one tusk with the point broken. Generally an old hog has his tusks damaged, either by fighting, or some say broken on purpose, as a short, thick, sharp tusk is more effective than a long, thin, overgrown one. The hogs on the churs about Pubna were the largest chur-hogs I met. As a rule chur-hogs do not attain the height of village hogs, or those who have lived for many years in dense tree-jungles.

The hogs of the Noakholly churs were rather low at the shoulders; but they were the pluckiest and the best to fight and for pace. The old heavy ones ran about thirty-two to thirty-three inches at the withers.

The village hogs, as we termed them, of Tippera, Central Rajshahye, Maldah, and Dinagepore were very large. I never saw one larger than the one I first recorded; and I have been at the death of nearly a thousand, and should have noted a higher had I seen it dead. But I have heard of hogs forty inches high, and I have seen the skulls of hogs from Dinagepore and Rungpore which were larger than any I ever saw killed. These heavy village monsters as a rule are cowardly and slow, hard to beat out of the "bênt" and thorny jungles, and show little fight when tackled. But the Noakholly chur-hogs were always game to the last; I never met a cowardly one.

Hogs differ in their skulls; some have proportionately large and some small heads, some are straight and some are slightly curved between the nose and forehead. I always considered a straight even contour the best. At one time I could have told nearly always from what country a hog came from his skull and the shape of his head.

With trouble and expense you can obtain pig-sticking from most of the districts in Eastern Bengal. From Chittagong, Backergunge, Sylhet, and a few zillahs you would have to go to neighbouring districts to obtain the sport. An official cannot spare much time without taking leave. A Backergunge sportsman might easily join a Noakholly one in the finest country that was to be found in my time. A Sylhet officer would find it difficult to hunt beyond the confines of his own marshy water-covered zillah. In most districts, however, sport is obtainable either within the district itself or by the aid of railroads and good common roads suitable for hacking or driving buggies on.

Calcutta, I should say, is about the best place to enjoy hog-hunting from, especially if you are a member of the Tent Club. If you should be stationed at or near Calcutta, I would advise you to endeavour to become a member of that very agreeable institution. From the nature of the sport of hog-hunting, it is impossible that the meetings of a club should be open to a number of riders as are the meetings with packs of fox-hounds. The best number of men to ride a hog is two, or at most three; one is sufficient; at least half of my own hog-hunting at Noakholly was carried on without a companion. I could not get one. If there are six or more men, I will call them, as we did in the field, spears; if more than five spears are of the party it is better, unless the parties can be separated by the jungle, to divide them, and to arrange that the first hog shall be ridden by two, three, or more spears, and that the others shall wait till a second hog breaks. It is quite certain that in a tolerably open country many spears to one hog interfere with each other, and that the sport is much spoilt. Often, indeed, some four or five spears rush madly after a middling hog and so allow the best hog in the jungle to make his escape, while his smaller friend is being ridden. It is difficult to make rules on the subject; when made, as far as my experience goes, they are generally disregarded. But luckily, except from Calcutta and its neighbourhood, spears who are really well mounted, able to ride and kill a hog single-handed, and willing to join in a meeting are not very numerous. I cannot now name a district, except the twenty-four pergunnahs, in Eastern Bengal proper which could supply more than four really good spears since indigo-planting received its death-blow.

When the alluvial shores of most of the smaller navigable streams in Kishnaghur, Moorshedabad, Rajshahye, Jessore, Furreedpore, Pubna, Mymensing, Dacca, and Tippera were green with indigo and the lovely doob-grass galloping-ground, and hospitable factories tenanted by keen intelligent English gentlemen in the prime of life were to be seen all over the country, hog-hunting parties were common everywhere in these districts; but by the time I left India the action of the heads of the Civil Service had almost crushed out the chief of the indigo interest. The factories are to be seen in ruins all over Eastern Bengal. Hog-hunting lost most of its ardent followers in the mofussil, and the ryots of Lower Bengal many of their best protectors and employers.

When I was a member of the Calcutta Tent Club, in the early days of Lord Dalhousie's reign, when railroads did not exist, the Tent Club confined its action to the south of Calcutta chiefly—to the plains of Budgebudge and Parbuttia, to Amptollah and Diamond Harbour, and such easily accessible places. But when the rail was established, then operations were extended to Kishnaghur and Goalundo on the Ganges; and about the same time the Club visited the splendid hunting-grounds of the old salt-manufacturing district about Tumlook. Long after I left Calcutta I was present with the Tent

Club as a guest at all these places. There is no mofussil station that commands anything like the above area; but still by the aid of rail and road, horse-dawks and driving-dawks, palkees and boats you can hunt over a very widely extended country, if you are determined energetically to spare neither trouble nor expense, from most stations.

Noakholly, on the east of the Megna, was the best place I was appointed to for hog-hunting. I elected to stop there solely on account of the splendid sport: hog-hunting first, then snipe and jungle-fowl and tiger-shooting. It was a station most heartily disliked by the Service generally. "A mud-bank on the Megna, where they made bad salt and stuck pigs," such was its definition as given to me by a friend. There was no society to speak of. It was out of the way, difficult to get at and to leave. The river route to the station was most dangerous, and the land route very tedious and expensive. But I was very happy there for six years: the greater part of my spare time was spent in hog-hunting.

When I first went to the district I found that in the best hunting-grounds of which I heard so much, the landlord, or rather landlady, a great Zemindaree Ranee, paid a small army of shikarries to keep down the hogs. I at once sent for the Ranee's agent, a judicious and clever Hindoo, and explained to him that it was to the benefit of the district and his employer, and of all the inhabitants, that the Collector-Magistrate (that was myself) and the great landlords should be in good accord and pull well and pleasantly together. To this the Baboo obsequiously agreed. I then said that if I was to stay in this benighted district I must enjoy my favourite sport of pig-sticking to the utmost, and that he must at once remove all shikarries from the best hog-hunting ground. I would kill the hogs for nothing and he might employ his shikarries in the lands in the interior of the zillah where hogs abounded, but where the sport could not compare with that on the riverain alluvial chur-lands. By degrees I talked him over. The shikarries were removed. I was especially partial to the Baboo in the matter of revenue settlements; I did the best I could for him, and he adhered to his bargain, nearly, not quite, to the end of my time. In building his cutcherry at Hingootea he made it in such a fashion that a few Europeans could use it as a hunting-box; and as it was within an hour's ride of my headquarters, I did so use it for six years.

In various ways I preserved the country and got up the sport. The finest island for hunting was Siddhee. The farm of Siddhee I obtained for a European gentleman, afterwards killed in the service of Government by the mutineers. This gentleman preserved for me to such an extent that once I saw at least one hundred and fifty hogs of different sizes and sexes burst at one time from the end of a jhow-jungle.

Once in the rains I paid a visit to my favourite Hingootea jungle, going by boat; the country was then too wet for sport. To my horror I found several boats manned by Mughs, or trading-boatmen from the Arrakan coast,

who had found out my best preserve and had slaughtered no less than fourteen breeding-sows, whose bodies I saw. This was terrible, and of course it had to be stopped; and I stopped it thus:—The left bank of the Megna river and the stream on that side are not safe at the spring-tide, when the huge Megna-river bores are apt to overwhelm the boats and drown the occupants. Several lives had lately been lost in such storms. I therefore, having then complete command of the police, issued orders forbidding any boats to use the north-eastern passage or make fast to that side of the river between Bomminy Thanna and the Bhullooah Salt Chokee, and directed that the traffic should follow the more safe course on the other side. This order was carried out, and my best hunting-grounds preserved and my breeding-sows protected.

Whether in these days of rapid posts and telegraphs—complicated systems of appeal whereby the local officers are thwarted by ignorant officials at a distance, influenced by lying vakeels—and now that the magistracy and police duties are not united as they were in my time, you could manage things in this way may be doubtful; but when the Collector-Magistrate, his District Superintendent of police, and his Judge are of the right sportsman-like stamp, a great deal can be done.

Whenever I found that a destructive shikarry was kept to destroy pigs in a country where there was good sport, I generally contrived to bribe him to go to a distant place as an under policeman or in some coveted post. With protection such as this, continued for several years, you may believe that hog-hunting flourished and was glorious sport to the end of the Indian Mutiny, if it has not been as good since.

Letter No. 11.

Noakholly Churs described.—Chur Siddhee.—Other islands in the Megna river.—Inundations described.—Tippera country.—Dacca.—Mymensing.—Horses in Mymensing going in the loins.—Patna.—Introduction of the present spear used in Bengal.—Countries bordering the Ganges: on both banks.—Tumlook.

The best sport was on the churs on the mainland and in the island of Siddhee. The whole western shore of the mainland of Noakholly from the mouth of the Fenny river southward to Luckimpore Bazaar, which touches Tippera, northward for a width of several miles, was what is called chur-land. These lands consisted of extensive plains of sandy deposit brought down by the Megna. These had been covered with long grass and light jungle and tamarisk, and had been held by the Government itself, and without cultivation, for salt-manufacture. The grass and jungle afforded the fuel for this

manufacture; they also afforded refuge for great numbers of wild hogs and hog-deer, some tigers, and a few herds of wild buffaloes.

The last tigers in the churs on the mainland were killed about 1851. The buffaloes were thinned out, and the remainder retired towards the dense reedy jungles on the Backergunge side of the Megna and towards the Soonderbunds. The hog-deer, which had been exceedingly numerous, were just disappearing as the jungle got less and less, when I was in charge of the district; but the hogs remained plentiful wherever they were not shot down by professional shikarries, paid for the duty.

The grass-land on these plains was most delightful galloping-ground, and fit for horses nearly all the year round. But there were innumerable tidal nullahs with soft muddy bottoms and sides ("ponk"), difficult to get into, and more difficult to get out of; the water at high tide varied from ten to twenty feet in depth. These ponky nullahs were the only obstacles to be met with when once a hog took to the open. The hog would swim across readily when the tide was in, and would struggle and roll and get across somehow when it was out; but in most places these nullahs were impassable for horses except at certain fords and by swimming at the high tides. There were no stones in the district, and no clay or hard ground even in the dry season. During the six years in which I hunted so much over these churs, I never had a shoe on a horse's foot, nor lameness in the feet or fetlock-joints.

The island of Siddhee was, without exception, the very best pig-sticking ground and country a sportsman could desire. Hogs were innumerable. One morning I left a jungle with at least one hundred and fifty wild pigs in front of me, and I should think forty or fifty of these were fine boars fit for sport.

The jungles were so light that a few beaters were all that was required. But the hogs in the cold season laid out in grassy rushes not a foot high scarcely. The art was to start them as quietly as possible, so as to get one to break away without putting up many others. Budderuddeen used to present himself at breakfast and say, "In this plain there are ten hogs sleeping, and in that eleven. I have marked them all, and the biggest seems to me in such and such a spot." We used to go quietly—two riders and one man, who would throw a clod and so start our friend. The hogs were exceedingly gallant, and fast too—would always fight to the last. There was capital riding-ground between the ponky nullahs, which did not give so much trouble as on the mainland churs. The only objections to Siddhee were that you could only visit it properly, with due regard to official business at head-quarters, in the winter. With the spring winds the passage across the river was dangerous, and possibly you might have been detained on the island for some days. The water was bad and brackish. Inhabitants were few; they went over for short periods to plough, and to plant and to reap. An English friend of mine, to whom I gave the island in farm, built a nice bungalow some three miles from the bank of the island; I put up some temporary

stabling and huts, and used to keep my horses and syces there for a month, going to the island whenever I could manage it.

There were other large islands in the estuary of the Megna—Hattea, Nulcheera, Algee, and others. I visited them and killed hogs and deer and buffaloes in each, but they were difficult of access. In fact the hunting on the mainland near Chur Hingootea and that on Chur Siddhee was so inexhaustible and so excellent that I gave up going anywhere else to try for inferior sport.

The great island of Duckin Shabazpore had few hogs on it, owing greatly to the number of tigers. I killed nine tigers in the first five days I shot in that island. I believe these tigers came from their home in the Backergunge Soonderbunds to Duckin Shabazpore.

The whole of the district of Noakholly towards Tippera affords hog-hunting, but the beating is more difficult than in the churs. The hogs lie in the thick thorny and tree-jungles on the banks of tanks, and in the sites of deserted villages which have become overgrown with jungles. All the churs on the mainland, and still more the islands in the Megna, are liable to most disastrous inundations, which will always occur at intervals. When in the autumn the volume of water in the Ganges and Brahmapootra rises, swollen with the rains and the melting of Himalayan snow, and meets the equinoctial tide at the full moon coming up the Bay of Bengal with a stormy south or south-west wind, and when this tempest continues for more than forty-eight hours, it seems as if the flow of the river water is checked by the tides, till at last the huge wave of the incoming tide rises to a great height, and with irresistible force overwhelms the country for a hundred miles or more, sweeping away houses and cattle, destroying all the tanks, filling them with salt water and salt mud, devastating all the culturable and cultivated land, covering it with a salt silt, and undoing the work of years of agricultural labour.

Such inundations happened several times while I was in India, and lately have been described in the 'Times' newspaper; they render the land desolate, jungle again gains ground. The sites of villages get covered with thickets, and wild boars and wild beasts are the chief and only gainers. No bad inundation happened when I was in Noakholly. One had caused great ruin just before I joined my appointment. A few months before I left I was obliged to go to Calcutta for surgical advice as I had been badly mauled by a leopard. The Baboo I have above mentioned took advantage of my absence to begin cutting down the best jungle at Hingootea, which had already been half carried away by diluvion and the attack of the Megna river. I came back just in time to preserve the remainder of the jungle. I knew I was going to England before very long. I sent for the Baboo and upbraided him with breach of faith. I told him that for nearly six years I had ruled the district with kindness, and that the dreaded "seilābee," or disastrous inundation, had never harmed them; I should, however, soon retire to England on furlough, and then they might protect themselves

against the river as they best could. This made much impression at the time; but next year, when the devastating tidal wave did really cause great havoc, the belief in my statement was so great that I am convinced that if I had agreed to come back and protect the district again, not a hog in the whole of Noakholly would have been shot or mobbed to death—for a time, at any rate. The periodical inundations had been delayed so long that I had good ground for prophesying that one would soon occur.

The Tippera district affords some pig-sticking. In the neighbourhood of Doudcandee sport used to be good. There were patches of grass surrounded by cultivation. If shikarries are restrained, good sport may be got here about harvest-time, but the ground is heavy. The Dacca sportsmen look on this part of Tippera as their best ground, and now, I believe, hunt to the south of Doudcandee.

In the interior of the Tippera district, deserted villages and large tanks, whose banks are covered with thorny jungle, not far from the hills yield fair sport. But these places only hold hogs once; after they have been well beaten out and the hogs killed, the sows desert them, and they will not hold hogs again till after at least two seasons of rest.

In the north of Tippera and south of Sylhet there is hog-hunting to be got in the spring. Hogs are not very numerous, as they are murdered every year at the rise of the waters. I only hunted in this country once, and I know no one else who ever hunted hogs there at all.

Dacca is a very fine district for this sport. Besides Doudcandee already mentioned, there is some chur-land lying to the west of the Bunsee river, not far from Thanna Sabhar, where I have had good sport. There is also some ground about the Bhowal pergunnah, and between it and the Thanna Toongee.

I discovered a deserted little village here, that consisted of perhaps four homesteads and their gardens, all gone to ruin and desolation, which so often held hogs that we christened it "Neverblank," and it was hardly ever blank from 1861 to 1872. I have heard of sport from it since. Why so small a place gave so great attraction to hogs I could never discover. I may refer to Neverblank again. For more pig-sticking the Dacca men must go towards Goalundo or to Mymensing.

There are many places in the Mymensing districts where good hog-hunting is to be got. At one time, and long before I knew the district, it was considered the best country in Bengal. There was a military cantonment at Jumalpore, on the Brahmapootra, and, I believe, a hog-hunting club. I have been told that the scenes in the well-known hog-hunting pictures by Platt were drawn from this part of the country, and I know that the landscape represents exactly the hills and plains of Mymensing. The favourite ground in those days was the chur-land all along the left or eastern bank of the Brahmapootra up to Assam. When I tried this country I was generally on

shooting expeditions, hog-hunting being for the time made subservient to tiger-shooting. But one or two of us were keen hog-hunters, and when we came to country where hogs were at all plentiful we went at them with the spear. I discovered, however, that the new police, who had been located at a new police station, or Thanna, just where the Garrow and Shooshung Hills touch the Brahmapootra, were all fond of pork, and spent most of their time and the government ammunition in shooting pigs. I found a huge heap of boar skulls behind the thanna. This quite accounted for the scarcity of hogs. Tigers too were exceedingly numerous; our party killed twenty-three tigers, as will be noticed perhaps under the head of tiger-shooting. There is no doubt but that tigers will soon clear a jungle of hogs if other prey cannot be found. A young sow or a little pig is easily shot by a brave Bengal policeman or by a party of them armed with government weapons; but a tiger or a solitary fighting old boar is a different animal, and the brave Bengalee generally prefers to shoot a weaker, less dangerous, and more palatable animal. But good hog-hunting might easily be got up on these churs if pig-shooting was repressed for a season or two.

There is nice ground and often a large number of hogs in the Tikree plains west of the Bunsee, which borders the Bhowal forest for many miles. This was a grand country for all kinds of sport, perhaps the choicest spot I ever knew. I hear rumours that a railway from Dacca will go near this country; if it does the sport will probably disappear. Another good hunting-place will have to be marked as spoilt, and the spear and the double-barrel must find other plains and other low bush-jungle where their merits can be proved. I believe there are plenty of good places in the north of Mymensing.

Bygonbari factory and its neighbourhood on both sides of the Mymensing river yielded good hog-hunting, and so did Toldoodung and all the bheels at the foot of the Shooshung Hills, where the grass was sufficiently burnt and the ground in rideable order. This was a country in which a shikarry like Budderuddeen was invaluable. In three days' scouting with two elephants he would report exactly what jungles held hogs and were on good ground, and what coverts were not worth visiting. Without his aid I should have spent half the time in finding out the jungles which should have been employed in beating them out and killing the boars.

But there was one terrible drawback to hog-hunting in Mymensing. Arab horses, and, indeed, other kinds of horses also, go in the loins if kept in the district after the cold season and during the hot weather and the rains. My losses were ruinous. I lost by this fell disease, "going in the loins," six as good Arabs as ever I had (each bought at a sum much higher than £100, in two instances at nearly £200) within six months.

I had always ridden hog-hunting on Arabs for choice in preference to other horses. It was not worth while to buy really good horses for such a danger-

ously unhealthy district; I therefore had to content myself with clumsy Walers—horses that would buck and give trouble when fresh and in condition —or such country-bred horses as I could occasionally pick up. On such cattle hog-hunting was not nearly so charming a sport as when mounted on fleet, active, strong, good-mouthed Arabs; neither could I kill a hog off a tall Waler in half the style I could off a really good Arab. None of the gentlemen at Mymensing station kept good horses, or many of any sort, or cared much for hog-hunting.

When at Noakholly, although there were many tigers, every sport was held subservient to hog-hunting; but at Mymensing, for the reasons given above and because the general shooting was so excellent, hog-hunting, to my great sorrow, had greatly to give place to tiger- and large-game-shooting from the howdah.

As you proceed up the Ganges from its junction with the Megna you will find fair hog-hunting on both banks. In the Furreedpore district, near the terminus at Goalundo, I was able to give Lord Mayo, the Governor-General and Viceroy of India, what he was pleased to designate as the best sport he had seen for many years. On the Pubna side of this river there must be fine hog-hunting countries. There used to be; and it was when hunting from Pubna that Mr. Mills, of the Bengal Civil Service, about 1830 introduced the short Bengal spear. Before his time it was the custom to throw spears, to use them as javelins. You will see this depicted in the pictures in Williamson's 'Field Sports in India,' which I used to pore over in the winter nights of my childhood. Mills found that the throwing of these light spears resulted in more wounding than killing, and the short spear was tried. It was then weighted with lead at the upper end and found to be much more effective. Then it was ruled that no first spear given by throwing should count as a spear at all. Then the light javelin-spear disappeared from Eastern Bengal. The long underhand spear used in Bombay and Central India found no favour when tried against the short Bengal weapon.

Going upwards still against the stream of the Ganges you will find hog-hunting in numerous places along the river-boundary of Moorshedabad, notably at Akragunge. Hurrysunkur, Shikarpore, and the Tar bheel, more inland on the right or southern side, were famous hunting-grounds, and so were the churs, or diaras as they are called here, about Ram Chunderdee Diara, where Henry Torrens gave his famous party in 1850. I am not acquainted with the ground higher up than the Moorshedabad district, on the right bank of the Ganges.

On the left bank there is sport to be got all along the districts of Rajshahye, Maldah, and Purneah, as far as the Bhaugalpore district, and there my knowledge of hog-hunting country ends.

In the interior of the districts on the left bank, viz. Purneah, Maldah, Rajshahye, Patna, Dinagepore, and Rungpore, very excellent hog-hunting

has been got whenever search was made for it. The Nawab of Moorshedabad generally made an expedition right through these districts, accompanied by more than two score of elephants and a large army of tagrag and bobtail that shot every thing and spared nothing, but were especially fond of shooting wild sows just before young pigs should have been born to them. But this invasion generally followed the same route, and did not do nearly so much harm to hog-hunting as it would have done had it come about the time of the rice-harvest or soon after. I used to get capital sport by trying ground a few miles right and left of the Nawab's usual line of march.

In Dinagepore, on the banks of the Tangan, and in parts of Rungpore, well known to a famous Danish gentleman connected with Rungpore, good hog-hunting was to be got. Details of sport in these countries are to be found plentifully in the pages of the Bengal sporting magazines for the last forty years.

From the station of Rampore Beauliah, the headquarters of the Rajshahye district (if the station has not been again carried away by the river), you can easily hunt on the mainland on the north bank and on the churs opposite the station and on the Moorshedabad churs. Gingerry and Akragunge were the best of them in my time. By judiciously laying palkee and horse-dawks you can reach the rail and hunt with the Tent Club occasionally, say at Christmas. The Pubna and Goalundo countries are easily got at: the return up stream is more tedious. You can also work the delightful sporting district of Maldah if you can get away from office for, say, four days.

In Purneah, besides the country on the banks of the Ganges near the hospitable factories of Kolassy and Monshahye, there is fair hog-hunting to be got all along the Koosy river and also in the north of the district near the foot of the hills. But in much of this country there are no men who really care to spend money in hog-hunting. Shooting from elephants is cheaper and more popular. If no hog-hunting gentlemen interest themselves in the sport and in the preservation of hogs for it, the shooting-parties shoot great numbers of them. But I always found when hog-hunting could be got up and a sufficiency of riders to make up proper parties, the planters and leading landholders in these districts were always willing to preserve the hogs where the riding-ground was good. In very many places popular English officials might easily get up fair sport for the spear, and where that is to be got few men who can mount themselves properly and ride tolerably will desert the saddle and the spear for the howdah and the double-barrelled breech-loader.

The only other country I shall refer to after this long and wearisome description is the Tumlook. This was originally a large area set aside for salt manufacture, kept uncultivated and growing large patches of grass and other jungle for fuel. In many respects the country resembled Noakholly. The hogs were numerous and very plucky. The ground is, however, much harder than on the banks of the Megna; in many places there are hidden

ditches, and falls are often more numerous than hogs. It is the favourite hunting-ground of the Tent Club, and some of their very best sport has been got at Tumlook.

Letter No. 12.

Horses for Hog-hunting. Cape Horses. Arabs. Country-breds.—Walers. Objections to Walers.—The Dacca banker in the Doudcandee country.—The Waler "Badger."—Bucking.—English Horses.—Spears.—A good spear-head as contrasted with a badly shaped one.—Drawing of a spear-head.—The bamboo shaft.—How to prepare a spear.

After having discussed about the country for hog-hunting, we next come to consider the animal that is to carry you across that country when hog-hunting. This will greatly depend on your weight, your height, and your purse.

The best horses for the sport that ever I met with were well-bred compact ones from the Cape of Good Hope; they were fast, strong, and up to weight —very hardy—with bones and joints that stood knocking about on hard ground, but, above all, of most indomitable courage. Till the Suez Canal was opened, and the route round the Cape of Good Hope almost abandoned, there was much intercourse between Calcutta and Cape Town, and a considerable number of good horses were brought to Calcutta. No one, however, now goes from India to the Cape to recruit his health, few ships comparatively touch there, and Cape horses are hardly to be got.

If you are not exceedingly tall, and walk about or under 12 stone, and can afford it, you can mount yourself on Arab horses. I always preferred Arabs, and rode them, except at Mymensing; they are expensive, a good strong, well-made, compact, young, fresh Arab may be got from the Arab dealers for about Rs. 1200. For Rs. 1500 you should get as good an Arab as could be required for pig-sticking; at auctions and at sales you might get one much cheaper. For comfort and speed, attended with power of quickly turning and cleverness over rough ground, for soundness of constitution and joints, for good feet and sinews adapted to ground often as hard as a brick floor, for standing heat of the sun and keeping condition under difficult circumstances and inferior food, there is nothing to compare with a good Arab.

They seldom exceed fourteen hands and an inch, and the eye of a good judge is required to pick them out with good shoulders and good action, and as well-shaped legs and feet as can be got. As a rule, one half and more of Arab horses get shy at fighting hogs after a season or two; some never show fear. "Rouge-et-noir," the best pig-sticker that ever looked through my

bridles, carried me ten seasons, and was as brave at the end as he was on the first day; but this was exceptional. I generally had to sell my Arabs after two seasons; but, in fairness to them, it must be mentioned that I had about four times as much hog-hunting as any man of my time, and that at least one half of my hogs, when in the best country, were killed by myself alone, with no assistant to share the combats or encourage the lonely horse.

If you walk more than twelve stone, or up to fifteen, you will have much trouble in picking up Arabs strong enough to carry you fast across the country; but they are to be got, and I have known several:—"Alchemist," who was killed at Torrens's party, was one; "Braunstone," a handsome bay of my own, was another; "Chusan," about the best Arab I ever saw in the hunting-field, and well known on the turf; "Elipoo;" "'Pon my honour," who was killed in a blind ditch at Amptollah; all these horses were fast and up to weight. But they cost large sums of money, and were of a stamp not to be seen every day. Arabs, too, are more liable to "go in the loins" than other horses. If you are very tall, little Arabs will scarcely suit you.

Country-bred nags, as they are called, where they can be got with sufficient bone and action, are as a rule courageous and always hardy; they are difficult to procure, as the Government have agents always on the look out to pick up any fair-looking strong colts to mount the cavalry upon. Government keeps breeding-studs and establishments for bringing up colts; stallions are kept, and Government claims a right to purchase the produce at certain sums if they require it; the weeds and small fillies are sold off yearly. But I have seen and ridden many excellent country-bred pig-stickers; they are cheap, too, not a third the price of Arabs; and if you should meet with a country-bred mare with action and bone sufficient to carry you across country you ought not to let such a chance slip.

The next horses to be considered are those from Australia and New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, familiarly called Walers. You can buy these up to any weight and of many different classes; they are, if not adapted to the turf, much cheaper than Arabs. As a rule, they are courageous; I, however, never liked them. The well-bred ones were generally given to bucking, and exceedingly difficult to ride when fresh and in high condition. Those which stood fifteen hands and a half at the withers and above that were too tall for me; I never found them really handy, and could kill hogs much easier off compact well-bred Arabs. They did not stand knocking about; their feet and sinews gave way on hard and heated ground; but for heavy and strong men they were favourites. Half-bred, under-bred Walers I detested; they could not go the pace nor stand the hard ground or heat of the sun. Nothing is more disgusting than to find yourself mounted on a slower animal the man you are to ride against for first spear. A properly mounted sportsman, up to his work, can almost ride round a man mounted on a small slow Waler. I will give a case in point.

When first I was appointed to Tippera, I made arrangements for hunting the Doudcandee country with the Dacca men. I got the Doudcandee bungalow furnished and put in order; I arranged for elephants and beaters and commissariat, and a day for meeting was fixed. A friend of mine, a banker of Dacca, who had long been regarded as the leading hog-hunter of that place (why, I never could understand, as I knew far better riders in the hunt), wrote to me, asking me to be sure to wait till the Dacca men arrived, and not to begin disturbing the grass till Friday morning. We were all to dine together at the bungalow on the Thursday night. Imagine my chagrin and disgust when, just before dusk, as I came cantering up to the bungalow with a friend, I descried a party of spears, followed by elephants, coming home from the best and nearest ground. It appeared that the banker had heard that I was good at pig-sticking, and that I was mounted on good fast horses, so he persuaded his Dacca party just to have an afternoon to themselves before I could put in an appearance! I was intensely disgusted, for I lived near, and had preserved the ground, and kept it undisturbed for this meeting, besides having been the chief promoter of the whole thing.

"My friend," said I, "I will be even with you for this. I will stick to you, I will ride with you, and, if I can help it, you shall never take first spear again as long as I remain in the Tippera district;" and I did it, too. I rode eight boars against him during that meeting; I took the first spears with ease, and had every hog laid on the ground before the banker could flesh one spear in their bodies. I dare say I never could have done this had I not been mounted on fast, good, and well-conditioned Arabs. The banker rode his favourite style of animal—a half-bred Waler. He said they cost half the price of Arabs (very dear at that, I thought) and carried him better across the deep wet ground (a fact I very much doubt). He retired to Dacca very much disgusted, and never joined our parties again that season. He was not a bad man on a horse and was an experienced hog-hunter. Unfortunately he died of cholera the next year at Dacca.

I have known excellent, well-bred, weight-carrying Walers, on which heavy-weight good riders were hard to beat, especially when the ground was heavy and marshy; notably "Badger," the property of a distinguished member of the Tent Club, afterwards Master of the Dumfriesshire hounds, and celebrated on the English turf. At Torrens's party, where this friend took more spears than any one else, he had given "Badger" his fair share of the day's hard work and had taken to his Arabs; but he found these unable to carry him sufficiently fast over the marshy ground, so he mounted poor "Badger" again, and took the same prominent place as at first. "Badger" was up to fifteen stone, a fine fencer, fast, and could last—the best Waler hog-hunter I ever saw.

The great objection to Walers is their propensity to buck. Officials who only have time to hunt on holidays and occasionally cannot keep their

horses in condition by regularly riding all themselves on days when their time is required in office. No native rider scarcely can be trusted on a high-couraged fresh Waler: consequently, there is little pleasure in riding them during the early part of a hog-hunting expedition; the owners are being constantly thrown, and sometimes their saddles are thrown after them.

A friend of mine, about the best judge of a horse and the best manager of a stable I knew in India, and whose Walers were certainly much quieter than others, did at last tell me his secret for keeping them well-behaved. He said, "I never give them corn for two or three days before they go out hunting, nothing but hay; they eat their corn so well after the first day's hunting!" I hardly ever rode Walers, and I never tried this receipt.

I have seen a few good-tempered, fast, and active Walers who could be trusted not to buck; they were very few in number; and as Walers are bought at first some few weeks after they are landed, when weak and in wretched condition, it is impossible to find out whether they are given to bucking or not till you have kept them on good food for half a year at least.

I met with a good many men who hunted on Caboolee horses; these were galloways—stout and hardy, often courageous and handy and useful, but altogether too slow to be put in competition with good Arabs, Walers, country-bred, or English horses. They were cheap, standing the purchasers in from two hundred to four hundred rupees apiece. I tried some, but considered them useless for my purposes.

Occasionally you meet with English horses out hog-hunting. I need not describe these; as a rule, they cannot stand the hard ground and the heat. Lord Mayo had some very fine-looking English horses; I do not consider that he was satisfied with them for hog-hunting purposes. They are not met with often; I never rode one myself after a hog. My advice is, mount yourself on Arabs if you are under fourteen stone.

Men use all kinds of spears and generally bad ones. There are a few peculiarities which should require careful consideration, but if certain points are kept in mind there is ample room for variety. The absolute requirements of a spear are that it should penetrate easily and admit of easy withdrawal after having made as deep and fatal a wound as is practicable. Yet I know men who invariably use the three-cornered bayonet-spear, which is the worst form of spear I know: it is difficult to drive in deeply; the further you drive it the more it sticks: it is difficult to draw out. The wound made is small and, if not in a very mortal part, bleeds slowly and closes easily. It is difficult to make, expensive to buy, hard to sharpen, and consequently generally blunt. A good-shaped spear should cut an open wound all the way it penetrates, and the orifice cut by the blade should be so large that the bamboo shaft of the spear should follow the opening in the flesh with ease. The spear should also be so made as to cut its way out as well as when penetrating the flesh, and

thus enable you to withdraw your spear if possible even after the shaft has passed, say, three feet through the hide. If you provide for these conditions you may use the laurel-leaf pattern, or the pattern that for some years bore my name, or any other light or heavy, short or long lance-head you may prefer. My own pattern was discovered by accident, proved by practice, and never changed for fifteen years, because I never found its superior or its equal; it was plain and smooth everywhere, had no projections nor ridges nor grooves, was very strong and substantial and easily sharpened. I brought one home in 1858, and having met a gentleman in the hunting-field, one of the leading gun-makers in England, who now hunts from Melton, I got him to make me a dozen heads of the best steel and best workmanship from Birmingham, and I had at least half of these in use in 1872, when I killed my last Bengal hog.

I give a diagram of a good spear-head. The length should be about ten and half inches. If the outside measurement of the circumference of the socket at C D measures about three inches, a piece of tape passed round at A B should measure about four inches.

The sides of the blade should be sharp from half an inch above A B to the point G. The thickness of the steel from F to the point must be considerable in the centre, as the strength of the blade lies in this part. The steel will slope gradually from H to the edges of the blade.

The highly-tempered steel blade should be joined to the commoner metal of the hollow head at F without any projection or obstacle whatever.

There should be a hole at E, through which a peg made of iron, or wood even, about half an inch long, should be driven till it is flush with the metal of the spear-head. This peg is most useful, as it prevents you from drawing out the bamboo lance and leaving the spear-head in the wound. When you require to take the spear-head off from the bamboo, you just knock the peg inwards with a punch and then heat the socket end of the spear; the shellac will then melt and expel the bamboo without further trouble. When once you have tried this you will be astonished at the easiness of the operation.

The shaft of the spear must be bamboo. At one time I was taught that the only right thing was a shaft of what was called a male bamboo with no hollow at its centre; these are very difficult to procure and are much overrated. Let a bamboo be as thick and solid and masculine as you like, it will break like a twig if its bark or rind is completely cut through, or if a weevil has got into it; whereas the hollowest and most feminine of bamboos, if in good condition, which has its bark let well into the spear-socket and is sound, will not break with the weight of a thirty-five inch hog—no, not if he throws himself on his back and rolls over a high bank with a drop of six feet in his struggles to smash it.

What is required is a good sound strong bamboo, hollow or not, the same thickness throughout its length, which, when you try it with your own weight,

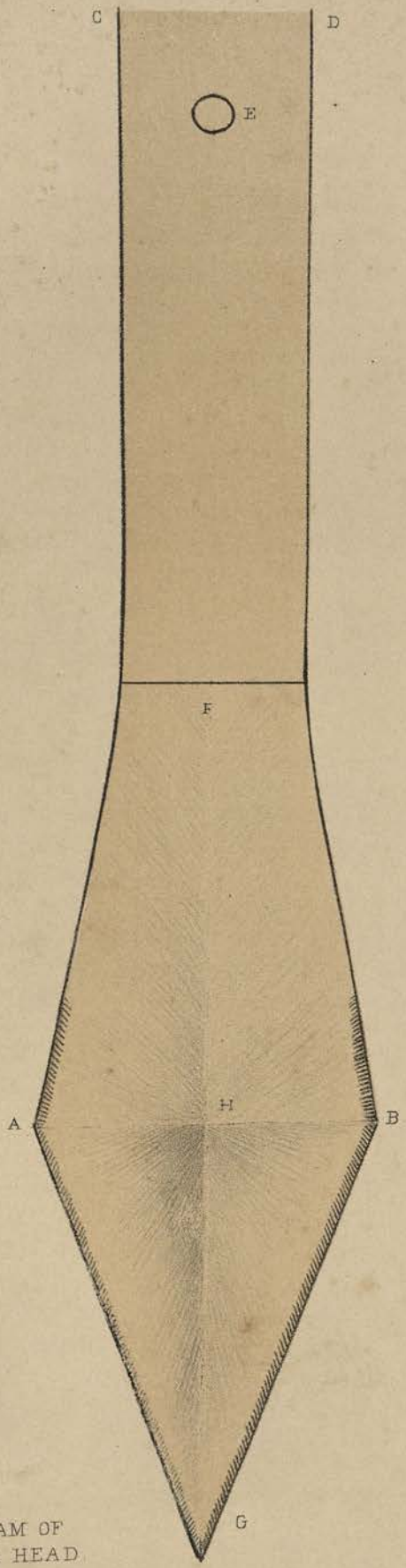


DIAGRAM OF
A SPEAR HEAD

bends firmly, and into which no weevil has penetrated; if with such a shaft you see that the complete rind or bark is let into the socket of the spear-head for at least a quarter of an inch before the cutting to a point commences, you will be quite safe till the bamboo gets cracked or split or attacked by insects.

A boar will split and smash the strongest bamboo like a lucifer-match if he bites it or slashes it with his sharp ivory tusk; a weevil will make a hole like the prick of a needle, and reduce the inside wood to dust in a night. In either case you must change the bamboo and replace it with a sound one. Inattention to these trivial points may cost you the life of a valuable horse. You should look your spears over after each meeting and oil them with earth-oil; examine them also after each day's hard trial.

Good male bamboos are expensive; but good fit straight shafts a little hollow inside may be got from any of the hill-stations—from the Bheerbhoom Hills or from the Eastern Hills. When at Noakholly, where sometimes I smashed eighteen shafts in a day, I took to using the "Moollee-bans"—about the hollowest kind of bamboo; they were straight as rulers and never broke unfairly in one season's work. At the end of the season I changed all my shafts and put new ones in; the cost at that time there was about two rupees per hundred. In Calcutta I have paid four rupees for a single shaft, and then it was not so good as a good Moollee-bans from the Tippera hills. But in very hot weather, after a season or two, the Moollee-bans may split with the heat: never keep them beyond one season.

After having carefully fitted the bamboo to the spear-head by pointing off the end after allowing a quarter of an inch of strong uninjured bark to enter the socket, you should heat the socket and melt shellac in it, and keep on pressing the shaft into the socket till the shellac cools and the whole becomes a fixture; then drive in the peg flush with the spear-head so that nothing projects.

Next cut the shaft to the length you prefer. The length of a spear is a matter of choice: if you ride high horses you will require longer spears than if you ride Arabs. There used to be a rule that a spear should just reach to the top of your solah topee as you stood on the ground.

After this it remains to weight the end of the spear with lead, which is done this way:—You make some notches in the bamboo, and you should have a mould either made of clay or from a hollow bamboo much larger than the shaft of your spear. In this you place your spear, holding it perfectly upright, and pour the requisite amount of lead round the end. After this you have only got to be first to receive the boar's charge and to drive your well-shaped properly-made spear clean through the thickest part of his body. The weight of lead is a matter of choice: some like a great deal; I never carried more than about one pound or three quarters: the less you can do with the better. The lead and the spear-blade can be used over and over again; the broken bamboo shaft can be made into sticks for carrying snipe.

Officers in the army constantly have their spear-heads made by their regimental armourers; most men buy theirs from the gunmakers. Some men think Anarchellum, of Salem, in the Madras Presidency, is the only one who can make a reliable spear. I, as I said, had some made for me in Birmingham; these were copied by Calcutta gunmakers, and I have seen some exact counterparts lately in the Haymarket, in London.

Letter No. 13.

My first Boar.—How I was taught to spear a hog properly by Cockburn. His rules. Consequences of lending a horse to a man who disregarded these rules.—Sad results to the Commissioner from going up slowly to a wounded boar.—Spear hogs well forward.—Never hold on to a spear if it sticks in the wound.—First blood.

I suppose men learn the proper way to spear a hog by practice and chance, as I did. The first killing spear I ever put into a hog was as good as the last, nearly twenty-five years afterwards. My first hog was killed in March 1848. I had only been a few days in Bengal; but I was staying with a friend who was a member of the Calcutta Tent Club and lent me his spears; I had my own imported Arab horses. The whole forenoon had been spent in trying to find a hog; but nothing was turned out of the jungles near Parbuttia, south of Calcutta, but sows. It is not allowable to kill sows. There is a rule by which a member of the Tent Club who kills a sow should be fined a dozen of champagne. However, in default of hogs that day an old sow was ridden and killed, and she fought, and I saw how the thing was done. At last I thought I would ride a jackal, and I rode one for some miles over lovely open plains; the older hands regarded it as a "griff-like" proceeding and I rode alone. It is much harder to ride and spear a jackal than a hog. After a long chase I speared the jackal, and just as I was dismounting a very fine hog appeared, going fast away from a patch of grass. I rode him at once, and after a gallop of a mile or so, gave him a slight prick. He then charged, and I believe I speared him in the ear. Then I galloped alongside and struck him hard, leaving my spear in his loins; at this I was much disgusted, because I recollected I had been told not to let go my spear. I thought the boar would escape, and no one would believe I had speared the first real boar I ever saw. The boar, however, went among some bamboos and got rid of the spear, which some fishermen brought to me, pointing to where the animal had gone. As soon as I got round the clump of bamboos I saw him and went at him as hard as I could. He came at me full charge. I do not know exactly how I managed it, but the spear went in at his shoulder and came out between the

hind legs. This, of course, was sufficient. By this time the other men had found out that I was riding a hog, and, coming up, I was found dancing round the dying hog. My horse, who had had quite enough in going after the jackal first and the hog next, was standing by. I had the head cut off and walked to the tents beside the man who carried it. The tusk is beside me now as I write. Champagne at dinner that night had no effect on me. Thus I got my first spear and first hog; but it was long before I delivered another so good a thrust as that, and two years passed before I was properly taught the art of spearing.

Pig-sticking on the banks of the Ganges opposite Pubna, I met Mr. Cockburn, an indigo-planter, considered at that time the best rider and hog-hunter in those parts; and as I was riding home with him he told me that he never had had a horse cut by a pig, and that he considered no man should ever let a hog wound his horse.

This was quite a novel idea to me, for I had seen many hogs killed and had killed many by this time; but I saw horses continually cut and badly injured, and did not know that it could be avoided. Cockburn, however, taught me a few cardinal rules, which served me well through my after hog-hunting career. I cannot say I never had a horse cut afterwards; but I never received a bad wound when I attended to his rules. The rules were:—

1st. Always gallop and go fast at a strong boar; never trot up or walk.

2nd. Always ride at him or receive his charge at an angle, and never end on.

3rd. Spear your boar well forward.

4th. Have your spear sharp, and never hold on to it if it does not come readily away.

It is assumed that it is the object of every good hog-hunter, after he has had a good run, to kill his hog in a masterly style, with as little torture to the hog as possible, and also at the same time to preserve the noble steed who has carried him so well from accident and injury from the tusks of the boar. To carry out these desires attention should be given to the rules I have laid down.

Nothing secures success and enables you to give a telling spear as pace; nothing ensures grief so certainly as going slowly up to a hog whether moving or standing at bay. The hide of the old Bengal boar is very tough. Few men could drive an ordinary spear far into the neck or shoulder if the hog were lying on the ground; but if you gallop fast at the hog, and the animal in addition comes also at you, the impetus received from the pace is so great that you can always send the spear-head deep into his vitals, and generally clean through his body. Nearly all the bad wounds received by horses are caused by going slowly up to fighting boars or by standing to receive the charge. I have seen it scores and scores of times; indeed it is the exception to see a hog charge and be received by a man who has his horse

standing or walking and the horse escape. The rush of a heavy strong boar cannot be stopped by the thrust of a spear with one hand; neither can a horse that is standing be moved out of danger in sufficient time to prevent the hog from using his tusks.

I very seldom lent a pig-sticker to a friend; but once I did lend my friend L—— one, on the condition that he should not take it slowly up to a hog. We had speared a fine boar near Neverblank, and L—— walked my nice chestnut up nearly to the boar, which at once charged and inflicted about the worst wound ever given to one of my own horses. The stifle was terribly gashed; the wound did not get well for months. The horse was permanently disfigured and lost half his value.

With a very small hog the rule may not be so imperative; and when riding for a first spear a man may be careless and go where he should not; but I consider that the rule should always be kept in mind, and that its transgression is extremely perilous.

I will give another lamentable instance of its neglect. A commissioner of Chittagong, an experienced sportsman, very good shot, who had killed loads of tigers and rhinoceros and speared and seen numbers of hogs speared, determined to join me in the splendid hog-hunting at Hingootea, in Noakholly, and brought two nice horses. This gentleman had unfortunately blown off some of the fingers of his right hand and was obliged to use a very light spear. I had got well away with a fine hog, and had given him one spear; the hog then got down into a nullah and took up his position in a nasty muddy kind of hole, where no horse could be taken up fast. I stood quiety waiting till the hog should leave this awkward spot. The commissioner came galloping up and said, "What are you waiting for?" I said, "He is speared and must come out of that; it is not safe to take a horse there." "Oh! never stop for anything," said the commissioner; so down he went. As soon as his horse's feet began to find out the mud the hog charged, knocked the light spear ten yards away, and cut the horse dreadfully. The boar then seemed satisfied and made off across the plain, and I had no difficulty in putting a spear clean through him at the next charge. I then returned to the unfortunate horse. There were deep gashes down the inside of the hind legs; arteries were divided. We could not stop the blood, and the horse bled to death.

The same day the commissioner's other horse got inflammation, from hard riding, probably, when not in proper condition. He also died. It was a most disastrous expedition.

As to the second rule, it means that if a hog should be charging full tilt with his head exactly to the south, you should not attack him in full front by riding at him with your horse's head due north. If you do so ride at him, you must lean forward to get the spear well into him; and if you do not miss him altogether, he will probably pass under your horse, whose fore

legs will foul the spear. The horse may be thrown down; and should this happen, the chances are that before you get up and get out of the way the boar will rip you to pieces. You may ride fast at the hog's head at right angles, or at an acute angle, or any way but end on.

Cockburn was careful to impress on me the necessity for spearing a charging hog well forward. If you merely split his nose and gallop by, he will do you no harm. The best place is just behind the head, or anywhere in the front half of the body will do. If, however, you only spear him towards the tail the chances are that the boar's tusk gets into the horse before the spear-wound disconcerts the boar. If you are going fast, the least wound distracts the boar for the instant, and you are past before he can harm you.

I used constantly to spear hogs in the middle of the forehead. There is a skull of a fine Siddhee hog now in my hall. This hog rose out of some short rushy grass at about one hundred yards, gave himself a shake, gave a great grunt, and came down at me with all his speed and force; luckily I got pace on to "Rouge-et-noir" at once, and we met with a great crash; the spear went straight through his forehead into his mouth, through the palate. I was obliged to let go: the hog staggered back about ten paces and fell dead. The spear-head was stuck so fast in the skull that I had great difficulty in getting it out. No hog that ever I struck fair in the forehead ever did my horses any harm; you are, however, apt to smash and blunt your spears by striking them hard against bone.

The rule as to sharpness of the spear seems self-evident. I know, however, that it is much neglected. Some spear-heads are not easily sharpened, and some badly made spears are very difficult to pull out. There are always iron-workers or armourers in every bazaar who will put an edge on your spear; in addition to this I used to sharpen mine on a hone. If you do not go very fast at an old boar, you will find it difficult enough to get a sharp spear well through him; this of course is more difficult if the spear is blunt. I have often seen a big old boar with eight or ten badly-delivered spears in him standing at bay, and the leaded ends of the spears swinging about in the most dangerous manner. The chances are that if you ride at a hog thus bristling with leaded spear-shafts, just as you deliver your spear two or three of these lumps of lead will hit you most dangerous blows about the head and face. I have seen very nasty accidents given in this manner.

But whatever you do, if the spear does not come out at the first pull after you have delivered your thrust, do not hang on to it; let it go. If you hold on to a spear deep in the body of a fierce heavy hog, all the advantages of pace, of a wound well in front, and of a sharp, deeply piercing spear will be sacrificed. The hog will recover from the first shock of the wound and will use his tusks with most deadly effect. Get away from the hog the instant you have speared him; take your spear with you if you can; but if you cannot, leave it sticking in and, at all hazards, get your horse clear from the hog.

The above maxims should be remembered by every young hog-hunter; it is lamentable to think that in general they are only learnt after the poor horses have suffered greatly from neglect of them.

The spear is not a light weapon, and if you hold it out much before you give the thrust your arm will be weakened and your thrust a poor one. There is no greater sign of the griff than to see an inexperienced man hold out his spear when he first begins to ride his hog; you should grasp the spear not far from the leaded end and let the shaft lie over your right thigh, keeping your hand on the rein and close to the pommel of your saddle. When you really mean to deliver your thrust you should raise your right hand and arm and give the blow instantaneously as hard as you can, and then give one pull to draw out the spear, so as to be ready to go at the hog again and give another deadly blow.

It is a neat thing to kill a hog handsomely with one delivered blow, and is done constantly when you are an adept in the management of your spear and your horse is a handy one; but, as a rule, a hog receives two or many more wounds before he falls. All the honour and glory attaches to the man who draws first blood; and the worst-delivered spear, a mere prick over the tail, if it draws first blood, is considered far better than a blow from a second man, even if it breaks the spine and lays the hog dead on the plain.

Some men, who are too extra-careful of themselves and their horses, not to put another complexion on the matter, have been known to give these humbugging kind of pricks and no others, and to arrogate to themselves great credit for first blood. I have known better men come up immediately and tell such a sportsman, "Kill the hog yourself;" and when left alone the "pricker" has had to ask for assistance and to lower his tone. I have known this done over and over again. There is many a man who can draw blood from a hog who cannot kill one single-handed.

Letter No. 14.

Pace of hogs.—The tally-ho!—The etiquette of riding for first spear.—The hog does not always require law.—How to ride a hog in Benna grass.—Hurrysunkur or Gilbert mile.—How to ride a hog, continued.—At times men should ride in concert and not jealously.—An episode at the Tent Club.—How a wounded hog took me to fresh jungles.—Throwing spears strictly prohibited.—Short and long spears compared.—Sharp short runs.

A full-grown boar goes at a pace which is astonishing considering the animal's heavy form. He has also capital wind, and if not blown by pace

A LITTLE OVER RIDDEN.

will keep going for many miles; but ordinarily a hog should be speared in open ground in about a mile and a half. When hogs have to be beaten out of thick jungle and forced across an open plain a certain amount of law must be allowed. Then it is etiquette to give a cheery tally-ho! or two as a signal for the start, and then the men ride their very hardest, no cantering or easy galloping is of any avail; you must make your horse go his very best pace, or you will either find the boar go away from you or the place of honour will fall to a faster rider. When a spear (by this term I mean a rider with a spear) gets within a length or two of the hog, the next man is bound not to jostle or interfere. The first rider may spear the hog running away or await the charge before he delivers his thrust; but if the hog jinks and the first rider is thrown out he has to strive his hardest to regain his former position and draw first blood. It is here that the great fun and excitement of the sport lies, and horsemanship and good hands tell; now comes the time to know if you have tilted your horse rightly, and if you can hold him, steady him at the charge, turn sharply with the hog, and receive his charge without missing him. All I can say is that the sport is grand and royal.

After a boar has once been speared, he gives up attempting to run away at speed, and is certain, if not rendered quite *hors de combat* by the first wound, to charge the second spear with all his rage and might; he will keep on charging till he receives his death-blow.

But hogs do not always break out of jungle and burst across the open plain. Much of the best pig-sticking occurs in grass varying from two to five feet high: here you give the hog no law; he may go any way, backwards, sideways, or in front, and very likely two or three hogs will start up at once. You can imagine a line of about twelve elephants, with three or four spears at intervals between them, the line stretching over a quarter of a mile: suddenly there is a hullabaloo, and the spears all gallop madly towards the place indicated, and some three big black animals are seen tearing through the three-feet-high benna grass; at them go all the spears. The first thing to know is whether they are boars or sows. It is understood that any of the spears who can ascertain for a certainty that his animal is a boar should shout tally-ho! loudly one or twice; this will call off the other spears should their animals be sows. If a spear rides his hog and does not give a view halloo, he is considered to behave sneakishly. Having ascertained that you are after a male—a regular stinker—and having given the proper tally-ho! you press your hog as hard as you can, consistently with the knowledge that if you override him the least in the grass he will jink behind you, perhaps escape, and perhaps let in number two spear. There is room for much judgment, and need also of good riding and careful management of your horse; the grass is sure to be full of white-ant hills and natural gutters and drains and stumpy rooty lumps of hard soil. You must sit back somewhat and keep a firm hold of your horse's head. The riding a hog fast in highish grass is an accomplish-

ment which requires practice and horsemanship, and it is rattling good fun. Boars, as a rule, fight very readily in grass if properly ridden and invited to charge. I think pig-sticking in practicable grass is superior sport to riding on the open plain; it certainly demands more skill.

There was a well-known place near the Shikarpore Indigo Factory called the Hurrysunkur or Gilbert mile. Two jungles were distant about one mile from each other; the intervening space was most beautiful grass riding-ground. A hog required sufficient start to induce it to go straight to the next jungle and not to turn back. Once fairly away, it required a good man and a fast horse to secure the hog before he reached the next jungle: a slow horse was useless, and an unhandy one little better; a good proper thrust of the spear was needed too, for a mere prick would not suffice to prevent the hog making good his escape. Many a fine hog have I speared and seen speared on the Hurrysunkur mile; I wonder if it still exists. Jungles change in character greatly in Bengal, especially in chur-lands, and very possibly Shikarpore site may now be at the bottom of the Ganges, or it may bear a village and date-trees instead of the nice null and grass-jungle that was preserved so carefully in 1848.

At times you may have to ride your hog first over open ground, then through difficult ground, and then in the open again; and this may go on more than once. Here there is ample room for craft and experience; if you ride him hard into the jungle, and as far as you can after he has entered it, he will hide to a certainty; you will probably lose him, and you will assuredly be delayed and have difficulty. The best way is to ride without pressing him, to keep him in sight quietly without any noise, watch him carefully; if unwounded, he will stop and prick his ears, champ his tusks, and look about him. But the Bengal boar who has not been much hunted is not a clever animal; he will go on if you let him, his point being a thicker jungly retreat: when he reaches the next open space you must keep very quiet, and let him steal well out into the open before you go really at him again.

If two or three spears will ride in concert and without jealousy, boars may often be killed this way; whereas if overridden, or if noise be made and shouts be given, they will crouch down in some hole or hide, and be hard to force into the open.

In early days, when hunting with the Tent Club, there was a well-known hog which regularly defeated us, and escaped by getting into a jungle, not very large, but consisting of high trees and thorny bênt-bushes and bamboos stretching across the ground, altogether a very nasty place. At last three of us agreed to ride slowly and quietly as well as we could through this, one in the centre and one on each side; we did this, and kept getting glimpses of the hog. Eventually he went to a ditch, the banks of which were covered with screw-pine, and sneaked along this; the ditch led into the open plain. I made signs to my two friends, and we followed him for a long way, and then

we gave the tally-ho! and he broke out of the ditch, took to the plain, and was killed. But the more curious tale remains to be told. Exactly ten years after this I was again hunting with the Tent Club when a fine boar took the same line. When he got into the bamboo-jungle the other spears retired; but I kept quietly going on, and I saw what looked like the exact hog of ten years ago going the same way: after some hesitation he entered the very same ditch, and, when far enough off to be sure that he could not escape, I gave the view halloo, and rode and killed him. I rode back to breakfast at the tents, and there were still one or two members of the club who recollected about the hog ten years before when I recalled the facts to their memories.

An unwounded hog often stops in the first thick patch of cover he can hide himself in, but one that is in pain and has been speared will keep pushing forward if not too hard pressed. In this way I once discovered some most excellent hog-hunting ground in Rajshahye. I had broken off my spear-head in a small hog—most probably the shaft was too large for the socket and the rind or bark had been cut; the little boar kept going along, and I followed quietly over two plains and through some tree-jungles; at last he went into some low grass, and close by a gang of labourers was at work under the supervision of a man with a sort of battle-axe on a bamboo; he lent me this, and as the hog was exhausted and small and was lying down, I stole up to him, and with one crack of the axe managed to cut his backbone in two. The men then told me that close by was a grass-jungle full of hogs. I went back to the party which I had left: they were all shooting from howdahs; I only had been riding and hog-hunting. We looked up the new jungle, and found it a first-rate one for hogs; and I and others came there again and had excellent fun.

It is not allowable, under any circumstances, to throw a spear. It is a most dangerous thing to throw a leaded spear; and a person who does so more than once should not be allowed to ride at any pig-sticking party. The leaded end of the spear will most likely strike the ground, and place the sharp spear-point upwards, so as to run into the horse of the rider nearest the hog. Twice have I seen horses killed in this manner. A spear which is thrown, even if it should strike a hog and bring blood, does not count as a first spear.

In the early days of pig-sticking a light javelin-like spear was used, and throwing was the rule; these spears are depicted in Williamson's 'Wild Sports of India,' a book that was the delight of my boyhood. Apparently in those days horses used to be disembowelled by hogs in a manner wholly unknown to my experience as a hog-hunter. Old hog-hunters have told me that the present short leaded spear in use in Bengal was introduced by Mr. Mills, of the Bengal Civil Service, about 1830, when he used to hunt in the Pubna district. Mills found that more hogs were wounded by these light spears than killed, and that men threw from a distance. He tried riding close up to the

hog, and receiving the charge of the hog with a thrust from a stiff sharp spear; this was found so much more effectual that the light spear was abandoned and spear-throwing tabooed.

The spears used generally in Madras and Bombay are much longer than Bengal spears; they taper toward the end of the shaft, and are carried and used in a different manner. They seem well adapted for spearing a hog that is running away. In Bengal we prefer to deliver the first spear, if possible, when the hog, in the full force of his might, is charging with impetus and weight; and with a little practice and skill it is easy to deliver a thrust with the short spear which should be fatal to the hog and keep the hunter harmless; but with the long spear the grasp of the weapon must be shortened and the spear reversed, and its length makes the action awkward and slow. I have ridden against men who used these long spears, and they admitted that there was much greater facility in riding in grass and in meeting charging boars with the short spear, which is nearly as easily carried as a whip, whereas the long spear is much in the way in long grass or in bamboo-jungle when riding at speed. My impression may be wrong. Every sportsman becomes fond of the weapon to which he was first introduced, and in the use of which he has become familiar and perhaps an adept. Some men miss their aim even with the short spear, and some hardly ever miss even with the long. In Bengal, however, both the long spear and the throwing spear have been discarded for nearly fifty years.

Often when a fast hog has his head straight for secure shelter he will decline to charge; you must then put on all your pace and make your attack in time for yourself and your companion, if you have one, to get two or three spear-thrusts deep into him before he gains the jungle. A great many hogs, if well ridden and well speared, may be secured almost at the very edge of jungles, into which if ever they enter they are lost to the hunter; and many a hog, for want of proper tactics, manages to gain safety by a hair's breadth before an unskilled rider can deliver a really punishing or deadly blow. In these cases a spear-thrust behind is useless; the wound must be given well forward and must penetrate deeply. The shape and sharpness of the spear tells greatly on such occasions.

Letter No. 15.

Accidents to Horses. Treatment of wounds.—Accidents to men. Falls.—Serious accident to myself.—How to manage when horse gets ponked.—Ponky nullahs. How I managed these at Hingootea.—Don't bucket your horse over marsh if the hog is far in front.—Pigs' nests.

Accidents to horses from hogs are common. The experienced hog-hunter who knows the maxims I learnt from Cockburn will seldom have his horse even slightly cut; but the tyro and the clumsy sportsman or bad rider to a certainty will have his horses badly wounded if he tackles many really good and savage boars. You should always take bandages, plaister, and needles to a pig-sticking party: if the wound is serious and extensive, you should at once get the horse placed in the nearest shed or native hut; nothing is so bad for a wound as to send the horse off to a distance, opening and inflaming the wound at every step and increasing the flow of blood. When the horse has reached the shed, you should get a person to hold the edges of the wound together as close as he can with his fingers; fasten the wound, when thus closed, with strips of plaister if you can, or bind a long cloth several times round it tightly, taking due care, if an artery is cut, not to bind so as to ensure bleeding to death. Arteries are not often cut, and never if the horse is taken up to a hog at speed. Sometimes it is necessary to sew up the wound: this is done by getting a person to hold the edges of the wound together; one stitch is then put in, and the thread tied and cut off; another stitch, at less than an inch distance, is then made and cut. Four or five stitches will suffice generally. If after a day or two the wound seems to inflame, it should be poulticed with a bran-and-charcoal poultice, and then washed with lukewarm water, and treated with pieces of linen and cold water; nothing more is advisable. If proud flesh grows, it should be lightly touched with a pencil of lunar caustic; I have found this far better than bluestone. Rest and attention will do all else that is required. As I lived generally near the hog-hunting meets, and had friends from a distance come to hunt with me, my stables were often full of wounded horses, and I had a great deal of experience in treating wounds. The chief points in my treatment were—rest, cleanliness, and cold water. Many skilled surgeons have given me praise for my surgery.

I saw few horses killed out hog-hunting. I have referred to one, "the Commissioner's at Hingootea;" I have noticed also two which were impaled on spears thrown at the hog running away. I will notice the death of the Arab horse "Alchemist" when writing about Mr. Torrens's party. The owner of the Waler "Badger" lost another favourite horse, "'Pon my honour," who broke his shoulder and fatally injured himself in a blind ditch in long grass at Amptollah when hunting with the Tent Club. Fatal acci-

dents are, however, rare, and not nearly so common to horses as in the English hunting field.

Fatal accidents to riders are exceedingly rare: only one do I know of positively; in this case, the gentleman, a friend of mine, had a fall at full gallop and broke his neck. I have had, and also seen, very many falls when galloping; indeed, once I had six in one hour; but I never saw much harm done. Collar-bones are often broken, especially in the hot season, when the ground is hard; in soft ground and long grass a rider is seldom the worse for a roll.

I was only badly hurt once out pig-sticking. It happened thus, on the 14th April, 1858, when the great Indian Mutiny was about ended:—As usual I was pig-sticking alone, that is, I had no companion who could ride; but my assistant, a young competition Wallah, just fresh from Oxford, was with me, but he only walked or rode on an elephant. It was between Hingootea and Chur Durvesh that we put up a fine hog in some "kewahbon," or screw-pine jungle. When first roused, he jumped at the elephant and marked him with a deep cut between the eyes, and the mahout remarked that the hog was exceedingly fierce. I was riding a chestnut Arab for the first time; he proved cowardly, was shy, and it was with great difficulty that I could hold him when the hog charged, which it did repeatedly and with great pluck. I got several good prods at him, and at last managed to send the spear nearly two feet into his body; I was obliged to leave the spear sticking in him. I had broken one spear in him and could get no other quickly. The hog sank as if dying, and I got off to look at a wound which the horse had received owing to his shying and unsteadiness; the cut was not a bad one. I then went towards the hog on foot; I saw by his eye that he still meant mischief, so I told my assistant that we had better get farther away: in attempting to get away, my foot caught in a creeper and I fell; in an instant he was down on me; he tossed me over, and then began biting and cutting at me; my chief endeavour was to keep him from ripping my stomach or cutting me in the inside of the thighs where the large arteries lie. I kept my legs firmly together, kicking him in the face with both feet, and somehow, either in the kicking or from a bite, my big toe was broken; I tried to keep his head off with my solah topee, but this was cut to atoms. I shoved him away with my hands, but he snapped off the end of my thumb. He then gashed me awfully on the outside of the left thigh; one wound was eleven inches long, and the points of the tusks came out in two places. Then some natives rushed in, belaboured the hog with lattees, and got hold of my arm and dragged me away. There we lay, looking at each other. The hog died in about five minutes. I lay bleeding and sent for a palankeen: before it was brought, I told my assistant to look at a certain spot and he would see the end of my thumb, which I saw fall there; he found it at once, and talked some nonsense about having it joined on again, as had been done to

some one at Oxford. However, he put the bit of thumb down, and it was at once carried off by a crow (*Corvus splendens*), and that was the end of the end of my thumb. A palankeen was brought; I was rolled into it and carried home—seven miles—blood dropping all the way.

The doctor met me at the door and had me carried to my bed; the wounds in my thigh were washed and sewn up; the splintered thumb-bone was next cut even with scissors. The doctor made light of the toe, but said, "If you don't get lockjaw, you have every chance of recovery this time." It was six weeks before I could stand; I, however, managed in ten days to sit up in bed and to do business, dictating orders and letters and signing papers. The first time I could get my hand down to my toe, I found it was broken badly. As the Medical Board said briefly afterwards, "The fracture was there; the anchylosis is complete, and we regret to say permanent." In this way I learnt a good deal about the treatment of wounds from wild boars' tusks.

If in trying to cross a ponky nullah your horse gets imbedded in the mud, jump off; do not attempt to let the horse plunge and plunge and strain himself badly; keep him down, and roll him over two or three times towards firmer ground. Two or three men can easily do this; I have done it very often. Sometimes you can cut bushes or grass and put under him, or the guddies of the elephants. These ponky nullahs give great trouble to sportsmen. The best jungle at Hingootea was called the big jungle; on the south of it rolled the deep broad Megna, with banks often eight feet high; to the west flowed the Noakholly river, which joined the Megna here; to the east and north were lovely extensive grass-plains—the very best riding or racing ground imaginable. But some three hundred yards from the jungle was a deep wide nullah—tidal and ponky, quite uncrossable save at a ford. To meet this obstacle, after having been badly ponked when the water was out, and after swimming across with difficulty when the tide was in, I made some fords with old bricks and bushes cut from the jungle. This did not suffice; I could never find the fords quickly enough when in an actual run. I then stuck up tall bamboos with flags at the fords; the hogs found out this, and whenever I deviated towards the fords, the hogs returned to the jungle. At last I hit upon a plan which brought death to scores of hogs: I got a native to ride behind me, and when the hogs neared the nullah, I told him to take up the running and press the hog, shouting loudly all the time; I rode to the ford and crossed, and when the native drove the boar across, I took up the chase. This plan answered capitally. So now you know what to do if you come across a jungle that holds hogs, but has hitherto been useless on account of an impassable nullah.

If a hog gets a good start, say half a mile or more, over ground that is very marshy, and you see him stealing slowly away, it is no use galloping hard at first; you will wind your horse before you reach the hog, who will then, if

firmer ground be near, run clean away from you. Ride carefully, and save your horse as much as possible till he gets on fair galloping ground; then lay into your hog at best pace.

In high benna grass, where you can only just catch glimpses of the hog, you must ride most judiciously, so as to keep the hog in sight; if you press him he will jink back; and you will probably lose him for a time. These places are generally full of white-ant hills, and if you ride fast against these you will be badly thrown. The hogs make themselves nests in this kind of grass; they cut and heap up the long stalks, and crawl underneath and sleep there. Many and many a hog have I stirred up from these nests; if in doing so you prick him with the spear, it does not count for first spear. Six out of seven of these nests are generally empty, but never pass a likely looking one without disturbing it.

Letter No. 16.

Great Hog-hunting party given by H. Torrens, Esq.—The riders.—The country.—The first beat.—The griffs.—The first day's sport. The evening.—Purchase and death of "Alchemist."—Two Boars at once.—Hurrysunkur.—Departure of the best hunter.—Gingerry Chur.—Akragunge.—Table of riders and how they prospered.

The greatest hog-hunting party given in my time was given by the late Henry Torrens, Esq., an accomplished member of the Bengal Civil Service, then holding the appointment of Governor-General's agent to the Nawab of Moorshedabad. Torrens had command of the Nawab's magnificent stud of elephants and the use of his tents and servants; but in other respects I believe the party was given entirely at Torrens's expense. He asked sportsmen from far and wide. There were two gentlemen from France, the Count de Lorge and his companion or tutor, Monsieur Nevou; a gentleman from Yorkshire, P. Saltmarshe, Esq., was present; several officers, most of whom were quartered at Berhampore, viz. Col. Sawyers, Capt. Stokes, Lieut. Gordon, Lieut. Harcourt, and others. There were three members of the Civil Service, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Longmore, and myself. There was one representative of the Calcutta Tent Club, Mr. J. Johnstone, who distinguished himself greatly. Dr. Young, of Berhampore, a heavy weight and an excellent sportsman, who was acquainted with the country, assisted Torrens in all the arrangements. And, lastly, there were the indigo-planters over whose fields we rode, who had preserved the country for more than a year, and to whom, as hog-hunters, we were all indebted; the chief of these were Messrs. Dalrymple, Deverell, McCloud, Campbell of Carbolia, Jaffray, Roberts, and Battersby. Most of the above-named gentlemen carried spears and took

part in nearly all the sport; but besides these for the first two or three days several friends from Calcutta and the neighbourhood enjoyed Torrens's hospitality. The encampment was large and comfortable; a mess-tent in the centre, capable of holding fifty guests at least, was surrounded by several single-poled tents, in each of which two guests could be accommodated. The first meet was at Ramchunderpore Deara, and the opening day was the 8th of March, 1850.

The encampment was moved when the immediate neighbourhood had been properly beaten out. The hunting-grounds were situated in the alluvial or chur country on the Moorshedabad side of the Ganges, opposite parts of Pubna and Rajshahye, and the kind of jungle was thus described by Torrens in one of the many accounts published at the time:—"The jungles of Ramchunderpore are long strips of thick reedy cover, lying in hollows about water, and scattered about an immense extent of alluvial plain-lands, the cleared portions of which grow indigo, which have formed at the confluence of the Ganges and Jellinghee rivers. It is called in the local dialect a dher, and, being covered with water in the rains, is in drier seasons not unhandsomely covered with pank or phassin as they call it up-country—that treacherous amalgam of bog, morass, and quicksand which is none of them and yet beats them each and all in abomination. The open ground between these covers, across new-sown indigo-lands, afforded excellent riding; but there was no want of variety. Virgin jungles, self-sown on the new alluvial lands called churs, afforded to the curious in equitation every obstacle combined that could tempt a man, even with game afoot, to hold hard. Now miles of thick-set cane-like reeds, semi-impervious to appearance, rising above the head of a mounted man, and covering an expanse where every eddy and counter current of the tumultuous waters that formed it had left its individual foss and hollow in the now indurated sand; or else ragged scrubby brakes of ill-conditioned attempts at low trees, which, being unable to stretch their heads as high as they would like, stretch their meagre arms abroad, as mean fellows do in this world of ours to stop those enviously who would give them the go-bye; or else grass so thick that the boar before you is only traceable by the wake his rushing progress leaves of shaking stems; this grass grows on lumpy uneven soil, where the subterranean labours of Sir Rat have favoured its spreading roots, where the keeping close to the boar under the circumstances is exactly one of those things that one always tells one's friend to do. And yet again there is a variety which deserves notice in the above jungle, that is when, growing in thick tufts, it has forced up tussocks or little hummocks of earth from a foot to 18 inches high; these lie close together, and when the jungle has been partially burned offer alternately the bush of half-scorched reeds or the stumps of those fully consumed, hardened with fire and sticking out from the earth like a vegetable hedgehog." And so Mr. Torrens goes on; but I will stop here, and merely add

that the description was true as regarded a great deal of the ground, and that, besides the difficulties described, there was plenty of very deep marshy ground across which no horse could go fast. But the better the horse the greater the distance between him and the man less strongly mounted. With such variety of land it was no wonder that on some days we killed nearly a score of hogs, whilst on others with very hard riding we could only score three or four.

The meeting occurred so long ago that the ink of my diary has faded and I can scarcely read it. Of the many notices written about that time in the papers and magazines I can obtain access to none, though I wrote some myself. I have Torrens's life by Hume, and for the rest must trust greatly to memory.

We began by beating a jungle which to an ordinary hog-hunting party would have seemed quite impracticable; but Torrens sent a line of fifty-five elephants into it, and by degrees thoroughly rousted it out. The beating at first was bad; four or five gentlemen were in howdahs, and seemed more intent on shooting civet-cats and birds that could not be considered game than on the pig-sticking; there was confusion and noise and interruption and breaks and openings in the line. Scarcely a hog broke the first beat; in the second a few were forced out, and after that each successive beat sent out more and more. Soon the elephants were left alone, and scarcely a spear was to be seen. Men had gone off in every possible direction. It had been arranged that the griffs (*i. e.* those youngsters who had never yet obtained a first spear) should ride together, and that no experienced hunter should interfere with them; and some eight or nine started fairly with a good boar. The result, as told by the griffs, was something like this:—"My beast of a horse ran away, and I never saw the boar again;" "I and so-and-so got ponked;" "I lost a stirrup in a beastly place;" "I got such a fall in the grass;" and so on. But one man said, "I rode hard, and when I got the other side of the bed of the river on the plain I could see no one to assist me; the boar stopped and looked very savage, so I thought I had best leave him alone." It was a curious fact connected with this meeting that no griff got a first spear at all. After the first day there was no restriction; but more experienced sportsmen, better mounted and all riding rather jealously, were too much for the youngsters.

My diary simply says we killed eight hogs that day. But two of the best spears had not arrived yet, viz. Johnstone and Longmore. Torrens's account does not quite agree with mine as to the numbers speared each day; but then Torrens was with the elephants, and only saw the actual fights occasionally. The ground on the first day was what I call excellent; there was no impracticable marsh, no quicksand which a practised rider, following the hog as a pilot, could not get across. The riding in the benna grass was fair. I cannot now say who got each spear. The sport was splendid; no small hogs were

A HOG JINKS.

killed; the slain were taken to the encampment on bullock carts. Up to this time I had never seen any hog-hunting nearly so good as this. We had a right merry night of it in the tents. Next day all the best spears had joined the party and most of the men who did not ride left us.

After dinner, when merriment and excitement were high, talk went a great deal as to the various kinds of horses which had been ridden, and Mr. Campbell of Carbolia admired Dr. Young's Arab "Alchemist" greatly and wanted to buy him. The Dr. at last said, "Well, money is a great thing to me, and perhaps the good horse may not last for ever; you may have him for Rs. 1200." So Campbell bought "Alchemist," a fine powerful bay horse, quite steady at hogs and well mannered. It so happened afterwards that the first hog Campbell rode this horse at was, in my opinion (formed since, not at the time), deaf; I met many deaf hogs in my after experience. Well this hog, which was an old one, seemed sulky when roused; he trotted slowly through the grass, but, sighting an old woman at the edge of the water which generally bordered these benna-grass jungles, he rushed at her, tossed her over his head, and inflicted two nasty cuts on her buttocks. Immediately after this Campbell and I rode for the first spear: the hog never quickened his pace; but just as Campbell, awkwardly as I thought, rode rather against him and delivered the blow, the hog passed under the horse's fore legs and threw him completely over, in much the same way as he had thrown the old woman, only the horse fell heavily. I then offered myself: the hog gave me a fair charge; I got a good spear into him, and he soon fell. But "Alchemist" rose no more; his back was broken, and he died. I believe the hog heard nothing and hardly knew what was going to happen till Campbell's spear pierced him, and then he threw up his huge head with all the force of his weighty body, and knocked the horse right over. Poor Campbell was disgusted and retired to his factory. The hog's tusks had inflicted no wound on the horse. Had Campbell ridden so as to spear the hog and pass on quickly, I do not think the accident would have happened; he rode, so to speak, into the hog, and they came together with fatal results.

Of course at so large a party as this, where so many hogs were killed, it would necessarily happen that several horses should be cut by hogs. Still "Alchemist's" was the only really bad accident; all the other wounded horses recovered satisfactorily, and no human being except the old woman, for whom a subscription was made, was injured at all. I had one horse cut in a way which I never afterwards saw happen. Three fine old hogs went away from the jungle at once, on the second day I think; three separate parties of us rode these hogs in different directions to start with. My hog, after a good fast run, came to bay at exactly the same place as one of the hogs ridden by some other spears. Just as I had delivered my thrust, and before I could get either my horse or my spear well away from my own hog, I found myself being charged by the other boar. I made a mull of it, and

the second hog cut my Arab rather badly in the stifle, and I broke my spear. Soon the spears of all the party were either broken or left sticking in the hogs: Harry Deverell, however, rode off to the jungle where the elephants were, and came back with two spears; with these the two fighting boars were disposed of.

On the 10th of March we killed fifteen hogs. Johnstone took five first spears and had an Arab well known on the turf, "Ploughboy," rather badly cut.

On the 12th camp was moved to Hurrysunkur. This was ground where we expected grand sport. There were plenty of hogs; but a natural embankment, formed during the rains of the preceding year, had interfered with the drainage. The ground was too marshy; the hogs gained the shelter of jungles of rush and tamarisk, where the riding was difficult. The hogs, as a rule, had the best of it; some were killed, and Johnstone's weight-carrier "Badger" was the only horse which really carried his rider properly over the marshy ground. It was great fun, however, and though the slaughter was small the sport was most exciting. The elephants revelled in the wet, and enjoyed the green herbage which we found it so difficult to push horses through.

After having done our best in the Soonakhoondy ground we returned to Ramchunderpore, and on the 16th March had another glorious day, killing fifteen hogs again. After this Johnstone left, having taken twenty first spears out of fifty-seven against more than a dozen competitors; he was not an accomplished horseman, but was very strong in the saddle, and his horses, both Arabs and Walers, were as good as money could procure. I and one or two others also left the party for a day or two.

On the 20th March most of us met again at Gingerry Chur, which was opposite Rampore Beauliah, a head civil station that was within a few years almost entirely carried away by the Ganges; none of the houses known to me remained; the destruction was terrible. The character of the ground where we hunted in Gingerry was totally different from that at Ramchunderpore or at Soonakhoondy. There was no cultivation and no really open or easy riding-ground; the chur was covered more or less thickly with dry benna grass; the soil was hard and full of ruts, stumps, and cracks. Men had to assist each other in riding the hogs; if one man tried to do the work alone he soon lost his pig. A good deal of shouting "Here he goes!" and tally-ho!-ing was necessary to keep the hog at his pace till he should become wounded, and then the management of horse and spear in the thick grass demanded skill. Several horses were cut, but eight hogs were killed.

The next day we beat Akragunge and had the best possible sport. Jungles here were thick and small, and the hogs had to cross the beautiful indigo-lands, where pace was required and where well-bred horses and light weights came to the front. The riding presented no difficulties; almost every big boar found was killed. The total of this day's sport was nineteen. On the

22nd we killed four hogs, and this splendid hunting expedition terminated. I doubt if any such great party was ever given before, and I am certain nothing approaching to it happened afterwards in Eastern Bengal.

The great number of elephants, between fifty and sixty, enabled us to beat jungles that would never have been entered by sportsmen who could command only a dozen elephants, and these jungles had been preserved as carefully as was possible. The Bengal ryot cultivated then very little rice in these parts; the open lands were sown with indigo and a few light crops such as mustard and linseed. Villages were few and far between and population scanty. Game, with the exception of wild hogs, was very scarce; a few hog-deer and black partridges were seen, and a floriken I think; but I did not hear of a single tiger or even leopard during the whole meet. I append a table, copied from Torrens's article in the sporting magazine, which shows the weights of the riders, the number of horses each had, the number of spears taken, and the horses which were hurt.

The table shows that a horse was cut and afterwards died of lockjaw. The accident must have happened on one of the days when I was absent, for I recollect nothing about it.

Riders.	Weights.	Horses.	Days out.	Spears.	Horses cut.	Remarks.
	st. lbs.					
J. Johnstone.....	12 10	5	10	20	3 1 speared	One horse speared in the belly by kicking a spear out of a wounded pig.
Dr. Young	15 7	5	meet	18	2	One slightly; one ridden at his first pig cut and died of lockjaw.
Simson	10 12	3	12	14	2	One severely.
P. Saltmarshe	11 12	3	meet	12	1	
C. Campbell, C.S. ..	11 7	3	9	9	1	Grazed by a jumping pig.
Longmore.....	12 0	4	meet	8	2	One badly.
Dalrymple	13 0	4	7	4	1	
Campbell of Carbolia	12 0	2	6	4	1 killed	Broke his back over a pig; shot.
Jaffray	11 7	2	8	2	1	Badly.
Deverell	13 6	3	12	2	0	
Roberts.....	10 10	1	5	2	0	

N.B.—This does not represent the number of riders or horses at the meet, but shows how weight and other considerations tell upon the first spear.

Letter No. 17.

Another large Hog-hunting party twenty years later.—Lord Mayo Governor-General of India.—How the party originated. Preparations.—The G.-G. and party arrive.—The riders and the manager of the beating.—The sport.—The effect of one day on a country.—The Calcutta Tent Club.—The country.—The camp.—Christmas doings.—Killing a Hog in a tank.—Narrow escape of a rider.—Convivial evening.—Variety of hunting-grounds.—Jungles.—Beating with elephants.—Riding in thick jungle.—Death of "'Pon my honour."—Hoogla-jungles.

The next meet I shall refer to was one of an entirely different kind. It took place in January 1871, twenty-one years after Torrens's great party, and in country about fifty miles more to the eastward on the same side of the Ganges. Things had altered greatly with me in those twenty-one years. In 1850 I was the junior civil officer at the small station of Rampore Beauliah, in the district of Rajshahye; in 1871 I was Commissioner of the Dacca Division, head of the service there, and presiding over five districts. In 1850 I had three Arabs and light official work; in 1871 I had eight Arabs, an excellent stud of elephants of my own, a great deal of official work and responsibility. In 1850 my pay was about Rs. 350 per mensem; in 1871 it was about Rs. 3500. I was a guest at Torrens's expense in 1850; but in 1871 I was, if not exactly host, the provider of the elephants and manager of the sport, with the Governor-General of India, his son, and his brother holding me responsible that that sport should be good.

The meet originated this way:—The Eastern Bengal Railway Company had completed the line so as to form a link between Calcutta and the Ganges at Goalundo, near the confluence of the Ganges and Brahmapootra rivers, thus opening up a most important traffic with Eastern and Northern Bengal and Assam. The Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Mayo, came to declare the railway open officially. Goalundo was in my division of Dacca, and as Commissioner I had to meet the Governor-General. I had never met him before, and only knew him by report. I had crammed myself with statistics as to revenue and roads, civil and criminal details, jails, and public work departmental affairs, tea-planting and Looshaye raids, and so on, and was awaiting His Excellency's arrival in my hottest cloth frock-coat and black bell topper hat, when I was summoned by an aide-de-camp.

Instead of inquiries into all those statistics, the Governor-General, after observing that the country was unlike any that he had hitherto seen, remarked that he thought the Bengal Civilians stayed too much at their stations, and did not go sufficiently about in their districts; and he thought that if they rode about more and hunted a little more it would enable them to know the people more intimately. I remarked that it had never been

charged against me that I did not go out hunting and shooting sufficiently, rather the reverse. Then said his lordship, "Why don't you show me some sport? why don't you give me some hog-hunting?" I said I should be glad to do my best, and that I thought I could show good hog-hunting. "Very good, will you give me some next Saturday?" "No, certainly not." "The Saturday after?" I hesitated. "The Saturday after that?" "Yes, I think I can ensure sport by that day." "So be it; Saturday the 14th January. Find out a good meet and I will be with you." And so I found myself bound to show the Governor-General and his friends a right good day's sport; and I did.

Lord Mayo told me that laborious official work and sedentary occupation told greatly on his health, and that his former active life and large frame required exercise, or he should break down. He considered it his duty to his queen and country to take one day's holiday in the week, otherwise he could not properly fulfil his duties as Governor-General. He therefore allowed himself every Saturday as a holiday; and the sport I was to give him must be managed so that he could avail himself of it between Friday at sunset and Sunday forenoon. Thus I was restricted to a certain distance from Calcutta. Tippera and Noakholly were out of the question from distance; Dacca was almost as bad, and there was no really grand pig-sticking near Dacca. All the country south of Calcutta was well worked by the Tent Club, whose members would never have advised Lord Mayo to apply to me for good hog-hunting if the club could have offered him as good sport as they thought I could show. I knew generally that hogs were plentiful in parts of Furreedpore; but I had never absolutely been there, and most of the indigo-planters who used to know that country had disappeared of late years. I was, however, bound to do my best.

I sent over Budderuddeen shikarry and my Jemmadar of Chuprassies with the elephants and Sowdaugor Mahout, with orders to look up the whole country and report by post every two days. I armed the jemmadar with a little official authority, authorizing them to obtain information and assistance from the police and landholders and tenants, for the purpose of finding out the best hog-hunting country for the Burra Lord Sahib. I could rely on Budderuddeen's inquiries, and after about a week he sent me most cheery reports, and I decided on hunting up the country near the mouth of the Chandna river, about Mooakoory Factory and Pangsha. Before the appointed day I sent my own elephants, five in number, and seven or eight lent by Khajah Asanoolla and his father Aldool Gunny, since created Nawab of Dacca. The country, as described by Budderuddeen, did not require more than a dozen elephants, and as far as he could ascertain it had never been hunted, or certainly not for very many years, and therefore abounded in old hogs. On the 12th and 13th of January I looked over the country myself.

On the 14th the Governor-General appeared early in the forenoon; he

brought with him his son and his brother and Capt. Gregory, and also Capt. James, Major Wallace of the Engineers, members of the Tent Club, Mr. Prestage, manager of the railway, and Mr. Buckland, of the Civil Service, about the best man for managing elephants and beating hogs out of thick jungle that I knew. I brought with me Mr. D. R. Lyall, Collector of Dacca, a very great friend and decidedly the straightest man under all the circumstances of life that I ever saw, barring his shooting; in every other aim he went straight as a die, and though by no means a finished horseman or well mounted he was hard to beat at a pig. This gentleman was with me for many years, and shot tigers and deer and rode hogs with me in several different zillahs; and I never wish for a better sporting chum.

The elephants were put in Buckland's charge. I directed the spears as regarded the jungles, and capital sport we had. The cover consisted of sites of old villages chiefly, abounding in small tanks and ditches filled with scrubby brushwood and reedy, thick, damp jungle and clumps of bamboos easy to beat; the ground was in nice condition and the riding presented no difficulties whatever.

A very fine hog was roused almost immediately; he was very fast, and we had a rattling race and contest for the spear, which I had the luck to gain. Instantly Lyall gave a great cheer—"Hurrah! first blood for Dacca." The Governor-General, who was the heaviest man I ever saw ride to a hog, got three first spears and enjoyed himself greatly. Once he started after a large sow, which took through a line of tall mustard-seed in yellow bloom. She loomed large with her broad black back. I soon saw her sex, and shouted "Sow, sow!" But my Lord rode on and speared her, and I finished her off. On coming back I told Lord Mayo it was a sow. "Why did not you tell me." "I did; I shouted 'Sow, sow!'" "Oh! I thought you said 'Now, now!' however, I did not hurt her much." "But I did," I said. "Well you are a regular pork-butcher, and kill every thing," said he.

The day was fine, and there is no day more enjoyable than a January day in Eastern Bengal, not hot and yet not a cloud in the sky. At 1 P.M. the Governor-General gave us a capital tiffin—hot dishes prepared at Government House and kept heated in air-tight boxes, brought to the spot on an elephant, and these viands were moistened with iced champagne; all under the greenwood tree. We soon went at the hogs again, and before the sun went down twelve fine old boars were slain; they fought and died gamely. I recollect no serious accident. The last fell dead in a deep muddy ditch. Circumstances required that I should return to Dacca that night, and I bid Lord Mayo adieu as he was standing in the mud directing the natives and his aide-de-camp how to drag out a monster, which I believe was put into a railway truck and his body exhibited at the steps of Government House in Calcutta. So ended one of the cheeriest day's hog-hunting I ever had, and which Lord Mayo told me was the best day's sport he had had out of Ireland.

An account of this day's sport, with an illustration, appeared in the 'Illustrated London News.'

The horses which the Governor-General rode were either English or Irish; a Devonshire horse proved very staunch at a fierce fighting hog, but a very fine brown mare decidedly refused to go near hogs at all. These horses, though perhaps necessary for the great weight they had to carry, were too big and not quick enough at turning for hog-hunters; most of the other horses were either Arabs or small compact Walers.

We certainly cleared out this part of the country, for on trying it again we got very poor sport and no large old hogs. That is the beauty of hunting a new country or one that has been undisturbed for several years: the boars get time to grow old, and of course every old sportsman elects to ride the biggest and finest old grey boar that appears; thus many hogs between one and two years of age escape, while the spears are engaged with their older companions.

For two seasons I was a member of the Calcutta Tent Club. In those days the club consisted of about a dozen members, who shared the expenses connected with the cost of elephants and beating, commissariat outlay, the keep of a first-rate cook and a few general servants. Members provided their own tents for sleeping accommodation and their own wine and liquor. Most, indeed all, the members were engaged in business all day; who but young military officers and strangers is not fully occupied in Bengal? So the meets were always arranged with reference to native or christian holidays (by the latter term I mean such festivals as Christmas, Easter, the Queen's birthday, and so on), and generally lasted for two days, occasionally for four. Members could ask friends; but it seldom happened that more than a dozen riders put in an appearance, and usually there were about half that number carrying spears. The usual meets between 1847 and 1857 (we used to date every thing in India from the mutiny year, either before or after it) were within twenty miles of Calcutta, and at these meets real old boars were rather scarce; but occasionally new ground was discovered. The first visit to new ground usually gave great sport, such as we got at Bussuntpore, to the south of Calcutta; occasionally we were disappointed, as at Beebecurrumpore. At one Christmas meeting we had great sport and very merry nights after it. A poor unfortunate spotted deer had been treated as a pet and fed sumptuously for this feast, and a long range of fireplaces with fourteen iron grates prepared on claywork, which was nearly as good as brickwork, had been made. A large, long, double-poled tent stood in the centre of the encampment, surrounded with about eight single-poled tents. Some of the members had horse-tents, others stabled their nags under trees, and others under the shelter of village huts. The village on this occasion happened to be inhabited by native christians, rather a good-looking set of people, with, I should say, no morals at all to speak of.

The elephants were, as usual, borrowed from the Government stud. The first day I think we killed six fine boars. The country, which was within the influence of the tides, was intersected with rivers and nullahs, and at times we made up parties on each bank of these streams. If a hog gained a deep stream and crossed and there were no spears on the other side he at first escaped; but not always. One hog which started on my side crossed, and the running was at once taken up by two experienced friends of mine on the other; but before I knew well what I was about I found myself and horse swimming across: so I went on. The hog had taken full speed through the centre of a village. My friends who were ahead rode outside the village; I galloped as hard as I could straight down the street. The little grey Arab, "Bullet" by name, which had been lent me by a friend, was pulling double, I could scarce hold him at all. At the end of a street was a large deep tank, surrounded on the other three sides with high embankments covered with thick thorny jungle, where hogs generally lurked; the hog went into the tank with a bound, and before I could stop my horse was in too. A horse, I found, could swim about twice as fast as a hog; so about the centre of the tank I neared him. He turned and swam very pluckily straight at me. I shortened the spear and gave it the boar with all my strength right between the shoulders; I pressed in the sharp spear as hard as I could, pushed the animal down as deep as the spear would allow, and, holding tight by the mane of the horse, reached the bank of the tank none the worse but minus both stirrups. The boar came slowly to the surface, and just managed to reach the edge of the water, where he fell and died.

My two friends were waiting the other side of the high embankment expecting the boar to break; after a time, hearing the natives talking and admiring the tusks of a big boar, they got inside the embankment and found the boar dead and no one but the villagers. The tank was then named after me as "Simmy's Tank."

I did a deal of swimming that day and thought it great fun, till I asked a native if there were any crocodiles in these streams, and he replied "Yes, and one took off a fine cow here early this morning." I swam no more nullahs that day. One thing I learnt which was of much use to me afterwards, and that was to take my feet out of the stirrups and cross the latter in front of the saddle before beginning to swim on horseback; if this be not done, as soon as the horse feels himself getting out of his depth he will plunge, your feet will go back, and most probably you will lose your stirrups.

We had several capital runs that day and good fights, and some of the horses were badly cut. One man, riding a bucking Waler, was thrown off just as the hog charged, and lucky for that man was it that an old experienced hog-hunter, mounted on a steady plucky horse, interposed at once and speared the hog and took off his attention, or there might have been a fatal accident; for an unarmed man before a large infuriated boar, unwounded

and scarcely blown, would have stood no earthly chance: the boar would have ripped him to pieces before succour could have arrived.

After a most enjoyable day's sport we all gathered at the tents and feasted on the fat haunches of that lovely spotted buck above referred to; there was no lack of well-iced wine. The night was so chilly that we all took to great coats and plaids and wraps of all kinds, though we were in Bengal. Cigars were lighted, warm beverages brewed; some most excellent songs were sung: one guest, who held a high appointment under Lord Dalhousie, was perhaps as good a singer as could be found outside the Italian opera. Christmas eve was a most cheery one. We at last got so warm that some of the party seemed to require cooling: one was found bathing his feet in the water, which shone bright with the moon's reflection; he sat on the stone steps, and somehow some one else, by mistake I fancy, shoved him right into the tank. Another gentleman leant against the kunats of his tent, praising his legs as being about the best in India; they had but one fault, they would not walk, so he remained for some time merely "marking time." The similarity of one tent to another in the moonlight was so remarkable that some sportsmen went into wrong beds. Those were merry and jovial days and nights, when we were all so much younger.

The generality of country hunted by the Tent Club was not like that where we went at the Christmas party just referred to, which was so full of streams. Nearer Calcutta the boars were sought for in large patches of grass (very valuable for roofing huts) in the suburbs of the city, and in the sites of old deserted homesteads covered with thick brushwood under palms and bamboos, abounding in partially dried-up ponds and ditches filled with rush and flags. Constantly large patches of cane-brake, called bênt, had to be beaten with great labour and determination: sometimes the hogs had to be closely pressed through mulberry-gardens, cultivated for silkworms; these were very difficult to ride through. There was also a famous kind of jungle of tall flag or rush called here "hoogla."

The management of the elephants in heavy cover and the beating was often faulty. Unless some gentleman devotes himself to managing the line it is impossible to have good beating; and if a person does this of course he must forego the riding part of the business. No man can keep ordinary elephants in line and make them force their way through bênt and thorny jungle unless he knows the native language, and, indeed, he ought to know each mahout by name. As a rule, in extensive difficult jungle the elephants used to get together and follow each other, leaving the best places unbeaten. Many a wily old hog found this out, and remained safe for several meets. The riding at the Tent Club was difficult compared to that in most of the zillahs where I have hunted. A great many hogs when started got lost, when, if the spears had arranged matters between themselves, they might have been accounted for. Very often old experienced members of the club who did not

ride nearly so hard or so well as some of their younger friends managed to spear hogs by quietly waiting at well-known spots; this was specially remarkable about places called Amptollah and the Stranger's Ditch. Indeed, I was so much impressed with this, that at times when I lost the hog I at once left the direct pursuit and went to find a very tall heavy sportsman, once president of the club, who seemed to know the run of every boar. He was too heavy to live with me in a fast meet across the open plain; he used on these occasions to say, "Oh! here you are again; well, there goes your boar." I must confess that this was somewhat mean.

Personally I never rode a hog through the Amptollah grass-jungle successfully; several times I tried it, but generally came on to my head in the hidden ditches. There were always strangers and hard riders who would do their best and ride as far as they could. On one occasion I rode a hog with Johnstone well into the grass; it was rather too thick for me. I left Johnstone pounding through the jungle and rode to where I expected to find my tall friend; I found him, and he went trotting along, down this ditch and up that bank, and quietly till he pulled up, just inside the village jungle, under the bamboos. After a few minutes the boar stole out, and, seeing all clear, went best pace across the plain; after fair law, tally-ho! was shouted, and we gave chase. The boar had already been well pumped and at once came to the charge, and we killed him in fair style. But where was Johnstone? He ought to have come into the open by this time. On returning we found that the gallant "'Pon my honour," a most valuable Arab, had injured himself so badly in one of the ditches that he could not stand; it turned out that the horse's shoulder was broken, and he had to be shot.

Towards March the Tent Club used to beat up the hoogla-jungles near Parbuttia. These were extensive, and hogs would dodge back and were loth to leave them; but such jungles are most easy to beat, and the riding here was very easy also. No hog had a chance; consequently it was only seldom that we found many in the Parbuttia hoogla. Up country hoogla-jungles are much liked; there is always cool shady lying in them, and they only grow in the neighbourhood of water; so game of all kinds resort to them if not too much disturbed; and the facility with which they can be beaten makes them favourites with the sportsman. Being devoid of thorns they can be beaten by coolies on foot, and a horseman can ride with difficulty with the line and keep it regular; the coolies must be armed with sticks, and should keep on shouting, or a boar may turn back and very possibly wound some of them.

LETTER No. 18.

Hog-hunting by myself or with one companion.—Noakholly sport.—Difficulty of getting companions for this sport.—Chur Siddhee and similar churs. Arrangements for hunting them.—Beaters and their grog and pork.—A deaf Hog.—Dogs.—Ground and cover at Siddhee.—Christmas 1853. Again in 1854.—Two days of wonderful sport.—A difficult Hog to kill.

HITHERTO I have written about hog-hunting at parties, attended by many spears, where two or three riders generally pursued each hog; but for many years, and during those when I came across the very best sport, I was either alone or could only obtain one companion who would really ride and hunt hogs.

I was stationed for about six years at Noakholly and for nearly two at Tippera, and for some time I was at Chittagong. During all that time there was but one civil officer stationed in the three zillahs who would ride a hog; he was Collector of Tippera, as keen a sportsman as I ever met, a very fair shot, and a strong rider. I taught him to spear hogs; except that he insisted on riding the biggest of horses and using rather too long a spear, he was as deadly a foe to the pig tribe as I ever rode with. But of six gentlemen who during my time were stationed with me at Noakholly, viz. the doctor and five assistants in the Civil Service, though each had at least one horse, and all were fond of shooting and came often out pig-sticking with me, not one ever attempted to ride a hog. Indeed, with the exception of one man, and he was an Irishman, stationed at Mymensing, I never met with one very junior Bengal civilian stationed at the same place as myself who would ride hogs. I knew several good hog-hunters of course; but, with the exception of Dacca, I never was located at the same place with one. At Dacca there was a large community and a regiment, and generally about two military officers and one civilian and two or three young planters or gentlemen connected with mercantile business would join a party. Otherwise I had generally to go by myself or accompanied with an indigo-planter, when I could secure such a companion. Very many young indigo-planters were keen hog-hunters, and, as a rule, they knew of good country and had two or three elephants or large bodies of coolies for beaters at their command. In Rajshahye and Purneah, as well as in the zillahs south and east of the Megna, I could scarce name a young hog-hunter. Once a gallant Victoria-Cross man was stationed at Chittagong, and came to me whenever he could; he was quite the best rider I ever met out hog-hunting, and was afterwards well known with the Ward stag-hounds and several packs of Irish fox-hounds.

For six years I spent most of my Christmas holidays at Chur Siddhee, an

island in the Megna. The island was then at its best for sport. The history of this island was like that of most of the large islands in the large estuary of the broad and dangerous Megna. At first it rose up as a sandbank or quicksand, only fit to bear wading-birds, crocodiles, and turtles; then herbage grew, and gradually, as the ground consolidated, it became wholly covered with high thick-stemmed grass and tamarisk-trees. Then the ground became gradually fit for rice-cultivation. Slowly the jungle was cleared away—cultivation increased, jungle decreased. At the time I first knew it it was not regularly inhabited; cultivators came over from the mainland, planted, watched the crops when grown to keep off hogs, buffaloes, and deer, reaped and thrashed the grain, and left the island for months. At the time I first visited Chur Siddhee there was too much jungle; by the time I left I suppose the island was half cultivated and at its best for sport, as it was full of pigs and yet could be easily beaten. I should think that since my time jungle has decreased and cultivation spread. But there is a drawback to the complete cultivation of the whole island; there is a want of water, and if tanks are dug they are sure to be spoilt when a disastrous inundation occurs. I have referred to these inundations before; their result is to fill up the tanks and spoil all the fresh water; the houses, mere huts, are carried off, the cultivation ruined for a time, and much of the land relapses into jungle.

Such was the history of Hatteah Island, except that, as soon as the land rose to a considerable height above the river, it began to break away and to be carried off in large portions by the force of the stream; in this way large estates disappear entirely. This is called Shikastee. Shikastee and Piewastee (the disappearance of land by the attack of the stream and the formation of new land in the centre of these huge estuaries) give rise to never-ending litigation in Eastern Bengal, and deadly fights for the possession of disputed new formations. In the days when Government made salt in Eastern Bengal these churs were temporarily appropriated for salt manufacture. To afford fuel for this manufacture much grass-jungle was preserved and cultivation discouraged; under these conditions hog-hunting and deer-shooting flourished amazingly. Similar accounts might be given of many islands and churs or alluvial formations attached to the riparian mainland.

But to revert to hog-hunting, especially at Chur Siddhee. There were no huts even when I first visited the island for a few days' hunting at Christmas. I got some coolies and made sufficiently good stables of the stalks of grass made into matting with split bamboos; these things were sent over from the mainland. A little temporary accommodation was provided of a similar kind for the natives and coolies who accompanied me. Sometimes I sent over a tent; but generally my party was accommodated in boats. The magistrate of Noakholly was obliged to keep a commodious boat for himself, and he had two or three guard-boats for his officials and his office; these were of the kind called coss-boats, adapted to the fierce tides of the Megna and its

confluents, and were rowed by from eight to ten rowers commanded by experienced marnjees or steerers. Before going on my Siddhee expeditions I let it be known that I required beaters, and these flocked to me in the shape of "Mughs," or boatmen from the Arracan coasts, who were always trading up and down the Megna, and who were delighted to assist in the sport, and required very little payment, seeing that I allowed them to carry off in their boats all the huge carcases of the hogs, merely retaining the heads as trophies. In addition to the pork, I supplied these Mughs liberally each evening with strong native liquor, a kind of arrack. After the day's sport was over the men were made to sit down in a row: I then took a jug full of liquor and gave each man a pannikin of it; he would throw back his head and pour the strong stuff down his throat in a most peculiar manner. Strangers used to admire this performance greatly. The Mughs were fine, active, well-made men, and beat these grass-jungles in good style. Elephants were not required, though at times I sent one or two to the island to enable friends who were with me, but who did not ride hogs, to see the sport and shoot a little if any buffaloes or hog-deer were in the jungles.

A deal of the country required no beating at all; indeed excessive quiet was the order in the very best of it. There were patches of low, thick, rush-like grass, hardly sufficiently high to conceal a large boar even when crouched like a hare in his form: the aim in such places was to get one hog to break away at a time and to leave the others undisturbed.

When once started the Siddhee hogs were very fast and gave good runs before coming to bay: they invariably fought most gamely; I never knew one that did not fight, nor one that uttered a squeak of pain. Often I met with deaf hogs, old tough-hided fellows, like the one that killed "Alchemist" at Torrens's party. I remember at the close of a most successful day, when I had killed fourteen hogs, and nine of them running, off my favourite "Rouge-et-noir," I declined to ride that horse any more; my other horses were done up. As there were several hogs in sight, my assistant, who delighted in taking as much share of the sport as he could without actual riding, and who walked or rode on an elephant, although he had a horse with him, entreated me to take his big country-bred mare and kill another; so I did. This hog was very old and, I believe, stone deaf; he took no notice of anything, but kept trotting on. He would not charge till the spear struck him, and was therefore very hard to kill. His hide was so tough that without additional impetus the mere force of a blow from my arm did not drive the spear in sufficiently to cause a mortal wound; each time I touched him he roared and rushed at me. At last he got hold of my foot, and luckily the stirrup-iron with it, and tried to pull me off: I put my arms round the mare's neck and held on tight; she gave the boar a very heavy kick and he let go. This seemed to have enraged the boar, and he had hurt my foot a great deal. I then rode right at him as hard as I could; this time he charged well home,

and I drove the spear well into his vitals. I was unable to put on a boot for about ten days, and the mare could never be induced to face a hog again. These deaf old hogs give a deal of trouble.

One Christmas I had the assistance of an officer from the regiment at Chittagong, a most beautiful rider, who enjoyed the sport and was as keen a man as could be. He brought with him a handsome setter, and the first time a hog stopped in a thick bush in a hollow, in spite of my warning, he let his setter go at it; the consequence was the hog cut him most dreadfully in a moment, following the poor dog up and ripping him awfully.

I often made use of pariah dogs, belonging to native shikarries out pig-sticking; but these animals merely pointed out the boars by scent; they took good care never to go near them. As a rule, dogs are not much use out hog-hunting.

The ground at Siddhee was the easiest to ride over and kill hogs on I ever came across; I have hunted for three days running there and never saw one fall nor one fence. The few ponky nullahs were distant from each other, and arrangements could be made to obviate necessity for crossing them. There were no stones and no hard ground, and hardly any very soft ground: the air was so salt that there was always a moisture on the land; when you rode through the tamarisk and grass-jungle in the early morning before the damp of dew and fog had dried off, your boots would be white with salt. The rains never made the ground too heavy; it was quite fit to ride over by the time the rice was ready for harvest. Generally the ears of rice were reaped and the long stubble left till spring, when it was burnt off. I never saw any other crop but rice. There were no villages, only a few huts here and there; the natives had not then established themselves with their families on the island. Great numbers of cattle were fed on it: there were herds of so called wild cattle; these, it was understood, were the descendants of cattle which had been abandoned in some disastrous inundations many many years ago, which had managed to survive the general destruction and had propagated and become rather numerous.

For some years I made an arrangement with my friend the collector of Tippera, who I have before referred to as a keen hog-hunter, that he should spend his Christmas holidays with me at Chur Siddhee if I would join him for the winter expedition among the jungle-fowl of the Tippera hills. Our camp at Siddhee was fixed on some secure small stream close to the large river; we slept and dined in boats and made arrangements with tents and temporary huts for the servants, horses, beaters, kitchen, &c.

In 1853, I see from the diary that we took over only two horses apiece to the island; arrangements for boats had to be made some weeks before the hunting actually came off. We killed on this occasion twenty-six boars in two days and a half. We had to leave at midday on the third day on account of the tides, which always required punctual attention, as the river could only

A CHUR SIDDHEE HOG CHARGES.

be crossed in safety once during the day and once also in the night if the weather was still and the moonlight good. The only event recorded at this meet was a narrow escape from a boar on foot: I thought he was done for, and went to pull out the spear, when he rose and fought, bore me down, and shoved me along the ground, his large tusks snapping and grinding much too close to me as I held on by the tough good spear, which did not break. My companion and some beaters came at once to the rescue and no harm was done.

Two horses were not sufficient. Had there been four or more riders with about four staunch horses apiece the number of hogs killed would probably have been doubled; we only rode the finest and oldest we put up.

At Christmas 1854, I could get no companion who would ride; but on the 24th December I killed twelve large boars and on the 25th thirteen. This, as I was single-handed, was most glorious sport: my arm was stiff and tired with the hard work. I was now I may say an accomplished handler of the spear, for I despatched these twenty-five old fighting boars without allowing the horses to receive a single scratch.

I visited the island again in February of the same season alone, spending some time shooting and riding wild cattle; I had better have devoted every minute to hog-hunting. The hogs were rather scarce; I was given to understand that they had left for want of fresh water to drink. I killed a good number. One horse, however, was very badly gashed in the stifle. One hog crossed a ponky nullah; as he was a remarkably fine one I resolved to follow him. I had great difficulty in getting across; but the hog when unpursued gave up going at any pace, so I got up with him again. He now took across a country where the tamarisk-jungle had been just cut, and the sharp stumps of the sticks rendered riding difficult; it was long before I could get really up to him. He charged fiercely; my spear-point broke off in his head. The getting a fresh spear caused loss of time. By bad management, and owing to the want of pluck in my Arab, the next spear, though it passed deep into him, was too far back in his body: he carried this spear two miles, during which he came across my boatmen carrying my crockery; he went straight at them, and the crockery was dropped and smashed. I now had a third spear and a hard fight, and that was left deep in him; the runners came up and I speared him twice again. He was now bristling with spears, with their heavy loaded ends swinging about most dangerously. Finally he reached the edge of the island; the upper ground was quite eight feet from the sandy edge of the water, and over this high bank he went, and there at last he died. I was nearly an hour killing this hog. These particulars are recorded in the diary, which it is very pleasing to read once more.

Letter No. 19.

Siddhee in 1857.—The jungle full of Hogs.—Accidents to Horses.—Treatment of a wound.—Disaster before dinner.—My largest number of kills in one day.—Chur Hingootea: its jungles and neighbourhood.—An old friend.—The village beat and "Rouge-et-noir's" behaviour.—Cheringa.—Death of a Greyhound.—Slook Chur.—Adventure in a boat. Dacca hunting: at Doudcandee and at Sabhar.—Hunting at Mymensing.—The Photograph.

The Christmas of 1857, the awful year of the Indian Mutiny, was one of the jolliest I ever spent at Chur Siddhee and the last. This time we were a merry and comparatively large party for such an out-of-the-way place. I had but one man who would ride; but there were three others who would shoot and play whist and make themselves agreeable, viz. the farmer of the island, my assistant, and the doctor. I had sent over two elephants and the farmer one. We had tents as well as boats, and had made every arrangement for a jovial Christmas meeting. I, alas! am the only survivor of that party. The farmer was afterwards killed by the mutineers; the collector was killed by a tiger; my assistant died, and I have heard that the doctor died lately. We only hunted two days, the 25th and 26th December, each day killing eighteen boars. One day we used the elephants. We had found a very extensive patch of jungle in a remote corner of the island: this jungle was called Dinky-bon, and was, I believe, a species of huge fern growing from four to seven feet high; it swarmed with pigs of all sizes. It was on this occasion that I left the jungle once with 150 pigs before me; they covered the whole plain like flocks of larks.

We did not escape without grief to our horses. One hog cut my boot—a bad gash for the leather, but I was not touched. One hog in front of the collector, both going at full speed, suddenly jumped right round and passed under his grey, nearly knocking man and horse over; a deep cut was inflicted on the horse's shoulder. I never saw a hog do this but once in my experience.

Another hog was hard ridden by both of us and speared; he got into a newly arranged place behind the island office, which the farmer dignified by the name of his garden; it looked like a large patch of tall thatching-grass. Thinking the hog was done, I rode the galloway (a useless Cabul pony which I had mounted, as my horses were done up, and which belonged to the Nazir) right into the grass, and found it was a series of ditches or trenches. Whilst stumbling about in this, I was charged by the hog and was unable to spear him; he slashed the horse's near flank, and inflicted a most dangerous wound on the inside of the leg also. I got the horse out of

the grass and into a hut close by, and thought he would be sure to die; but we closed the wound as well as we could, the doctor doing it artistically, and then, taking a long cummerbund from a native, we wound it as tight as we could round the hock-joint. It looked like a horse's leg with a feather bed tied on to it. However, at 6 P.M. it was reported that no blood had passed through this extraordinary bandage: it was left on; I returned to the island after a week and took it off. The horse recovered. It was quite the worst-looking wound I ever saw given by a hog's tusk; but I suppose no artery was severed.

The three gentlemen who did not ride went after buffaloes, and shot a fine bull. We had a rattling night, but it commenced badly. The assistant had obtained a fine ham—sent out in tin from Fortnum and Mason; we had one of the famous Chittagong turkeys. Just before dinner the assistant said, "Oh, Simmy! I must have another look at that lovely ham before they bring in the hot dinner;" and he went into the tent where dinner was being laid. I heard a fearful shout, and just caught a dim view of my assistant rushing out in the darkness. He stumbled and fell over a tent-rope, and as I went to his assistance, said he had just seen a pariah dog rush out of the tent with the ham. It was too true. We ate our Christmas turkey without ham; the farmer, who imitated Sims Reeves—"longo intervallo!"—warbled "The Bloom is on the Rye" and other ditties. At midnight we retired to our berths on board our boats, and next morning found ourselves on the mainland.

I never heard of two days in which a larger bag than thirty-six was made by two spears; indeed I believe it could only have been made at Chur Siddhee, and then only after several years of careful preserving—the farmer of the island and the collector, who was also magistrate, both looking carefully after the sport, and no shikarry or native with a fowling-piece having been permitted to go on the island for four years. I alone on March 11, 1857, killed sixteen boars, and that was my biggest number of spears during my Bengal experience. On this, the only time I ever visited Siddhee so late in the year, I managed to cross the Megna in the still moonlight, but the wind got up immediately afterwards, and my horses were detained on the island four days; they had no corn or grain, and were fed on rice.

To get to Chur Siddhee from the head station of Noakholly, one had to ride twelve or more miles to a place where a coss-boat could be safely stationed, and then, at a favourable time of the tide, to cross the Megna river at nearly its widest part; this took up much time. But there was most excellent hog-hunting to be got much nearer the station and much more conveniently on the mainland.

At Chur Hingootea there was a most convenient bungalow; it was only about six miles from the head station. There was a deep stream of nearly a hundred yards in width to be crossed: there was a ferry here, and if time

was given the ferryman would have two small boats fastened together; horses could be made to put their fore legs into one boat, and their hind ones into the other, and so be ferried across three at a time. Generally, however, there was but one small boat. My reins were always made to buckle on to the bits, and were not sewn on, so I easily made a leading-rein with which to guide the horse; and getting into the small boat myself, I swam the horse across the stream, wiped most of the moisture off his back, put on the saddle, and cantered him to the bungalow; by the time he reached it, the horse would be quite dry. All my horses at Noakholly took water readily.

There were several places that could be hunted from the Hingootea bungalow. The large jungle to the south-west was, when first I knew it, too extensive for sport; it was a grand stronghold for hogs and young pigs: the river, however, cut away large portions on one side; the natives were always too ready to cut down the jungle on the other; gradually it got less, then it became a most convenient size. It was getting too small when I left, and I have no doubt but that it totally disappeared after I left the district.

All the gentlemen at the station used to visit this bungalow, and we used to have jovial parties at it. After I had found out how to circumvent the hogs at the nasty ponky nullah, as told some way back, I killed great numbers from the big jungle. There was one old boar that I knew well for four years. Nothing could induce him to leave this jungle; he would always charge back through the elephants, and never gave me a chance. At last I told the doctor, who generally went on an elephant with a gun, to salute him behind with a charge of small snipe-shot, and he did so, or said he had done so, but the boar did not leave the jungle. To the north-east of this jungle for miles and miles spread a flat plain; why this remained uncultivated I never knew, unless from fear of inundation, to which, from its position, it was very much exposed. It grew no jungle even, except just about October, when some thin grass which had grown up in the rains was to be found here and there; this would hold hogs for a few weeks; and one day riding through this grass, I put up my old friend, the boar I had known so long. I at once said, "It is all up with you now; the big jungle is two miles and more away." He did not run far, he was too old and fat; he fought as well as he could. When killed I found that the doctor, instead of shooting him behind with small shot, had fired right into his head with No. 5; several of his back teeth were knocked out of his jaw, and many No. 5 shots were sticking flattened in various spots in his skull. I have the head now in my hall.

Besides the big jungle, there was what we called the village beat; this too ran alongside a tidal nullah. If the hogs crossed this on the Cheringa side we generally let them go; if they broke away in another direction the riding ground was good. Once a hog, said to be a good one, would not leave

this jungle; after beating him up twice, I said, "He is waiting for the tide to fill the nullah, and then he will take to Cheringa. If he does, I will swim across and kill him, if he is worth it." The roaring high tide presently came rushing in from the Megna, and filled the nullah in a few minutes; at the next beat a fine boar at once jumped in and swam across. My friends said, "Now, Simmy, go at him." So I swam the river, turned up my legs and let the water out of my boots, and set off after the hog, who had been slowly trotting towards the Cheringa jungles. There was plenty of room, but I had a long ride, perhaps two miles and a half, before I could tackle him; he fought well and was killed, and by the time I reached the stream on my way back the sun had set, there was a cold December wind blowing, and my friends had gone to the bungalow.

It is one thing to plunge into a stream in the excitement of the chase when the sun is up, and another to go quietly into deep cold water when there is nothing to be gained. I hardly liked it, and I felt my wet clothes chilly; so I looked about and found a canoe and a pole, and resolved to punt across the nullah and send a syce for the horse; so I tied the bridle round his head and let him nibble the grass, and put the saddle into the canoe and got across. I saw the beautiful Arab horse standing disconsolate on the other side, and I called him by his name, "Rouge-et-noir," and said "Ao, ao!" (come, come!), and the docile animal at once came into the river and swam across to me. My friends, who were smoking in the bungalow, and wondering how I should return across the stream, were immensely pleased with my favourite Arab pig-sticker; he certainly was the best I ever had, and as clever and as sensible as a dog.

There was more sport to be got at these two jungles than could be worked out in a day, but there were other churs within reach. Cheringa was an abandoned village, and though once there had been houses and gardens, they had relapsed into thorny jungles; there were many mango-trees, and in the season of early storms the hogs used to come from other jungles in numbers and feed on the fallen fruit.

It was here that I once tried to course hog-deer with greyhounds; deer were scarce. A fine hog broke away and the greyhounds after it; before I could prevent it, the leading dog went to the boar's head and was immediately killed—his entrails were at once cut out, and I could see his heart. The other greyhound was so frightened, it would hardly ever chase any animal again.

Across another stream was a large chur called Slook Chur. All these churs seemed to be supplied with hogs from Hingootea big jungle, and all the large hogs apparently ran towards that stronghold, and thus, if they could reach the streams in time, they managed to escape.

A large boar having played exactly the same tactics as the last but one I have referred to, jumped into the stream and swam in the direction of the

big jungle. The stream here was too wide and the banks too ponky, and it would have been impossible to have crossed a horse; but my assistant suggested that we should cross in a fishing-boat which was handy, and frighten the boar if possible from the Hingootea jungle, and make him take across the Slook Chur plain. So we crossed, and by firing a number of bullets in front of the boar and hooting, we got the animal to go again into the stream; but this time he was too near the mouth of the stream, and the tide carried him past and up the main river Megna. We then gave chase in the boat; the two fishermen paddled vigorously. We caught the hog up; he charged the boat when swimming as pluckily as he would have charged on dry land. I plunged a spear deep into him and held on; the assistant did the same, and I took out my spear and gave it him again, and thus we killed him and kept the body on the ends of the spears till we were paddled to the shore. This was the only boar I ever hunted in a boat.

There were many other good places in Noakholly, and when duty required me to visit different parts of the district I worked the hog-hunting that might be close at hand; but, except on such occasions, I always elected to hunt at Hingootea or Siddhee churs, where hog-hunting might be said to be inexhaustible.

I think I have written enough about Noakholly hog-hunting, and you may be wearied: the sport, however, never wearied or ever satisfied me; I thoroughly enjoyed it. No European save myself ever made so long a stay in the district; this was solely owing to my love of hog-hunting, and the clipping sport to be got there from October to May. I always look back to those days of glorious sport with fond regret; but now-a-days I never hear of it, nor do I see it mentioned, though reports of sport of different kinds and from most parts of India appear in numerous books and magazines.

My friends who were at Dacca and Mymensing, should they ever see these letters, would never forgive me if I wholly omitted to notice those districts, where I met with so much goodfellowship as well as good sport, and where I superintended the hog-hunting meets for so many years; so I must touch briefly on the sport in those zillahs.

The Dacca hunting was not to be compared with that at Noakholly, but still it was very good at times. The best of it, perhaps, was to be got from the Doudcandee staging bungalow on the Tippera side of the Dacca rivers. This was thirty-two miles from Comilla, the head station of Tippera, from which there was a good road, so that the Tippera folk could ride or drive to it in three hours.

To get at Doudcandee from Dacca you would have to ride or drive to Naraingunge, the port of Dacca, and there put horses and every other thing on board boats: from Naraingunge to Doudcandee the journey took up the best part of a night; that is to say, you could leave office in Dacca before sunset, ride or drive to Naraingunge, and hunt next morning at Doudcandee.

At one time near the bungalow were beautiful patches of benna grass, which held hogs and hog-deer; it depended wholly on the way these were preserved to decide as to sport. I have had excellent sport here; I had it as long ago as 1851, and also once again many years afterwards. Towards the end of my career, shikarries were paid to kill hogs about the bungalow, and we were obliged to go some distance to the south-east to get sport. I used to employ Budderuddeen and to map the villages; the jungle was thick and thorny, and the beating difficult. Latterly I rather avoided the Doudeandee meets.

About fourteen miles from Dacca was a place we christened Neverblank; here I have seen excellent sport. The chief stronghold of hogs was situated less than a mile from a nullah (I am not going to write more about tidal nullahs; there were none in Dacca). Nine times out of ten the hogs took to this nullah, and it was necessary to spear or turn them before they crossed. We did occasionally cross and follow them, but I cannot call to mind that we ever speared a Neverblank hog after he crossed the nullah. This place required that a rider should have a really fast horse and ride him right well; it was great sport, and invariably gave great enjoyment. If the hog once turned, his death might be regarded as certain; a number, however, escaped.

There were other nice jungles about, and on one occasion in the first bushes we beat we found a tiger. He bounded across the rice-fields in a beautiful manner; no one was ready with a gun, and no one was foolish enough to follow up with a spear.

Besides these two meets there was at times fair sport to be got near Thanna Sabhar, in large plains much covered with benna grass. Hog-deer, buffaloes, and floriken were to be got here also. This place, too, was much poached if the indigo-planter at Phoolburreah did not interest himself in preserving hogs. Indigo-cultivation has disappeared now, and the factories have been bought by the Nawabs of Dacca, sworn foes to swine, but who might, I know, be induced to preserve if the generality of Dacca officials wished hog-hunting to be got up.

In my day the coolies (Boonas) attached to the indigo factories used to come in hundreds and beat this grass. The riding was rather difficult and many hogs escaped; it was bad for horses, and their legs and sinews often were hurt. There was one bheel or place where water remained all the year round, and this was generally a sure find; it was from this I killed my last buffalo. I rode on horseback, as will be told in due course.

For other hog-hunting, the Dacca sportsmen must now, I think, join with parties which hunt about the country to which I took Lord Mayo.

At one time Mymensing had a great name as a hog-hunting district; the scene of those well-known hog-hunting pictures by Capt. Platt was laid in Mymensing. A regiment was stationed there, and a hog-hunting club carried

on the war. The military have now removed to Assam, and a quasi-military police shoot down the hogs on the Brahmapootra churs. This might easily be amended if the police officers in Lower Assam chose to encourage hog-hunting.

From Jumalpore subdivision in Mymensing all the way up the Brahmapootra river to Assam there is hog-hunting ground: there are large grassy plains; interspersed amongst these are nice patches of tamarisk-jungle. When the benna grass and other grass is well burnt and fed down by cattle, and where the tamarisk or jhow patches are not too large, hogs from the hills will assuredly be found if not too systematically fired at.

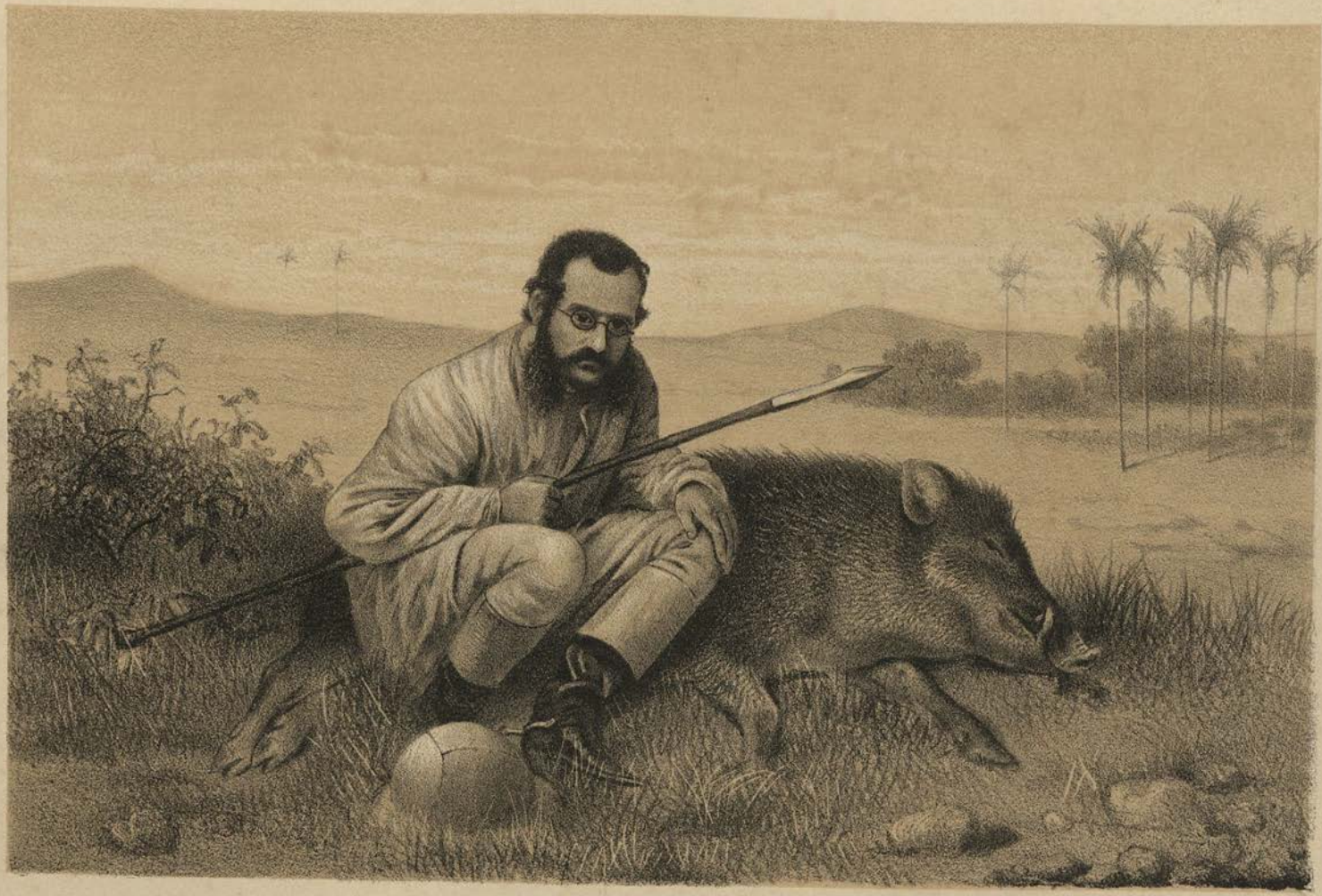
The soil is hard and very different from that of Noakholly, and the stumps of the strong grass are not nice for horses' fetlocks, and the riding over cut tamarisk is dangerously abominable; but these are the plains where the best hunting was at one time to be found, and similar plains exist in Bogra, Pubna, Dinagepore, Rajshahye, and Purneah; and wherever I have come across them I have found hogs and riding ground.

Close to the head station of Mymensing stood the factory of Bygonbari. The jungles here, scattered about the indigo-lands, consisted of patches of null-grass on the borders of streams and water. I had excellent hog-hunting here. It was here that I obtained the finest head as to tusks I ever saw; it was exhibited at the Zoological Society in 1872, and drawn in the 'Illustrated News' or 'The Graphic.' The upper tusk had been knocked out, and in consequence the lower tusk had grown so as to form more than half a circle; the point curled round till it rested on a strong back tooth; this stopped growth in this direction, but the pressure was so great that the root of the tusk was forced backwards and is actually coming through the lower jaw. I have the skull now and the tusk, but unfortunately it got broken. This hog I calculated must have been at least seven years old.

There are nice spots for hog-hunting all over the Mymensing districts. All along the base of the Shooshung hills in January, February, and March good sport is to be got; here you will find patches of rosebush-jungle—a jungle which always seemed to me to be most inviting to all game, and which I shall probably refer to in notices of tiger-, bear-, and deer-shooting. Hogs delight in rosebush-jungle, and it is only to be found near water.

On the south-western side of the great Bhowal jungle in Mymensing are beautiful plains for hog-hunting. Near Panch Tikree, and all along the bank of the river between Soobunkholly and Thanna Sabhar in Dacca, I worked this country chiefly for tigers and deer, and once I shot down the whole course of the Bunsee river, living in boats and moving on a little every day; but, as I have already stated, that dread disease, going in the loins, was the great stopper to good hog-hunting in Mymensing.

I have given a curious portrait of myself and a hog; its history was this:—A valued and most hospitable friend of mine in Purneah wished much to take



THE AUTHOR & A DEAD HOG.

a photograph of myself and a real hog killed on his grounds; so he arranged the apparatus near a good jungle, and we beat for a hog, and I killed the one now shown in the drawing. It was found almost impossible to get the hog-hunter and his quarry into focus for the camera in any other positions than the one in which they are shown; so, though it looked absurd, the photograph was taken. It is, of course, true and correct; you will observe the straight line of the boar's head and the smallness and shape of his ear. The tusk does not come out very clearly, but it is as it really existed. I never saw any other picture of a hog taken in the field. That hog was not a very large one, and was, we thought, between two and three years old.

With reference to the Plates of hog-hunting, you will observe that in one the hog has jinked to the right and doubled back, the horse exhibits timidity and is bounding wildly to the left. In another an inexperienced hog-hunter has slightly overridden his hog in the mud and rushes, and is wildly trying to draw first blood by a backhanded stroke of his spear, which will not do much harm to the boar. In a third, a small stumpy two-year-old Chur Siddhee hog is charging after the manner of Chur Siddhee hogs. The rider has speared him fairly; but the blow will not be immediately fatal, it will pass rather too much behind into the body of the hog.

In these pictures nothing is exaggerated; all the boars are small rather. I failed to obtain sufficiently good plates of tiger-hunting. I have never seen any to equal those by Phillip Trench, Esq., of the Bengal Civil Service. In these the trunks of the elephants are curled up: the terror of the animals and their attitudes and the exact mode of attack by a wounded tiger are singularly true; there is no elephant falsely waving his trunk in the air, and no impossible attitude of a tiger. Every animal and man is drawn after correct observation of facts; and truth is what is required in all plates which profess to instruct.

LETTER NO. 20.

Introductory to Tiger-shooting.—Keep Elephants of your own as soon as you can afford it. One at first and then more.—Formerly many civilians kept Studs of Elephants.—The Judge my first instructor as regarded Tigers. His howdahs. A good pattern necessary. —Elephants, how to be procured. Females preferable to Males. Elephants becoming "Must."—My own Stud.—Size of Elephants. Backs, pace, age, courage.

THE systematic regular continued pursuit of the sport of tiger-hunting is quite a different matter from the occasional shooting of a tiger on some

accidental fortunate occasions, such as when one is met with out hog-hunting, or during an ordinary shikar expedition, got up for deer, partridge, and miscellaneous sport. You may, and probably will, meet with a tiger or two in the course of your Indian career when shooting at some of these common sporting expeditions; but I have known men who have attended such meetings for twenty years without being able to kill their first tiger. If, however, you aspire to being a regular determined tiger-shooter you must have elephants of your own. The getting together a stud of elephants is a most expensive undertaking; probably you will begin with one elephant and gradually get more, till you own four or five. This last number is the maximum you should require.

Shooting on foot, except for snipe and quail, is too laborious to be long continued. With one howdah-elephant you can place yourself in the middle of a line of beaters and get an immense deal of sport killing deer and partridges and various kinds of game; you may even be useful in beating out hogs; but this sort of thing will not answer for regular tiger-shooting. I began with one elephant: I soon added to this two small beating-elephants; with these three I managed to carry about a very small camp equipage. Soon I added a second howdah-elephant; this was a very great addition, as it allowed me to change the howdah and not to burden one elephant every day with the hardest work. I found five elephants enough for all my purposes, for I generally could command the services of others not my own. I kept five before I took furlough to England; and as soon as possible after my return I got up another stud of five and kept it for ten years.

When I left Calcutta College, where, in those days, civilians were required to pass examinations before going on duty into the interior of the country, several civilians of note kept studs of elephants (I may name without offence Messrs. Yule, Grant, Cheape, Bracken, Taylor, Macdonald); but when I left Bengal in 1872 there was hardly one civilian but myself who owned elephants.

My first lessons in tiger-shooting were gained from the judge of Rajshahye, who had elephants, and asked me to come with him for a few days on his annual spring shikar trip: from him I learnt much about ball-shooting and howdahs and elephant-gear; also what sort of jungle was best for each particular kind of large game, and how and when to beat for it. The judge's style of howdah was on the whole the one I liked best; of course I thought I improved on it, but my best howdahs were built chiefly on the same lines, and all important points as to shape, strength, and lightness were kept in view all the time I was in India. I compared these with clumsy heavy things common at Dacca and with some from the Purneah district; in these very many faults were apparent. My howdahs always commanded a ready sale when I wanted to build new ones, and I may now say that my expenditure on howdahs when my whole shooting and hunting in India ended amounted to nothing at

all. A good thing, especially if rare, generally brings its value. I see no reason why you should not be equally fortunate in the matter of howdahs; so get a good pattern, and build and improve on it.

Before, however, treating of the equipment and gear of an elephant it is right that I should tell you something of the animal itself. Elephants are not to be obtained at a moment's notice; they may be bought at Sonapore fair, or at Nake Murd fair, north of Rungpore, or from itinerant elephant merchants, or from zemindars and planters; sometimes small ones are sold by the Government Khedda establishment, and occasionally some are imported from British Burma. My best belonged to friends, and were purchased when these gentlemen parted with studs; the others were picked up from zemindars or traders, chiefly from Mymensing. Occasionally licences were given to persons to catch elephants in the hills bordering on Mymensing, Sylhet, and Chittagong, and from these people both fresh-caught elephants and elephants that had been in use many years were obtainable.

Occasionally female elephants caught wild have dropped calves after capture, and these have been brought up; but, as a rule, they always turn out badly. They have not that dread of man which seems to exist in all wild elephants.

A fresh-caught elephant is a precarious purchase; it is very likely to die, and it may be years before its back becomes fit for bearing heavy burdens; but if you do buy a good-shaped tractable animal, which has been caught say two years, and it turns out well, it will be worth five times as much as when only two years from the forests.

I have bought very small elephants for one hundred rupees. I have bought good howdah-elephants, koonkees, or decoy-elephants for two thousand five hundred rupees. When I sold off my stud in 1872 my two best brought three thousand rupees each. I have known many sold for five thousand rupees an elephant. A really large and docile male would bring a tremendous price.

I never bought a male elephant, and would recommend you never to buy one; they are apt to become quite ungovernable at times when "Must," that is at rut. You may incur a great responsibility if they cause loss of life or do much damage; you may find them useless exactly at the time, and perhaps the only time in the year you want to use them. They require much better mahouts than female elephants do. Nevertheless I have used male elephants belonging to others, and have seen other persons use them, and they have behaved most courageously and brilliantly at times when the females have been cowed almost to uselessness.

There is a small hole in a male elephant's head, not far from the eye, about the size of a large pin's head; some time before the animal becomes "must," matter exudes from this hole. When this sign appears, it is usual to chain the animal securely and to starve and to physic him; by such

means the fury which is sexual is lessened and exhausted; but I do not profess to be learned in the management of male elephants.

Most of the elephants which composed my stud after furlough were first heard of by me at the Club in St. James's Square, London. One stud then belonged to a Bengal civilian, who parted with them to a Calcutta merchant; these were sent to me to take care of, and eventually I bought the two best. I bought also two others from a member of the club: one of these was small, but she was the fastest and perhaps the best elephant I ever owned; she had a remarkably hairy head. Alas! she died before I had her three seasons. The other, though large and strong, was old and slow; she, however, lasted out my time, and sold well when I retired: she was a well-known animal named "Shāmkolly."

I do not think there is any advantage to a sportsman in having very tall elephants. I cannot say much about exact heights. The largest elephant I ever rode or saw was one called "Bruce;" it belonged to the Government stud at Dacca; it was, I believe, about ten feet high, and had only one tusk, which was magnificent. This animal shook me to pieces; I could not shoot properly off him. Latterly he became so slow as to be almost a nuisance when in line.

My own female elephants, the large howdah ones, varied in size, I think, from a little under seven feet to nearly eight at the shoulder; I never recorded the exact size. Mahouts and merchants who sold elephants always made them out taller than they actually were; I went by the rule "Twice round an elephant's fore foot, when standing with it on the ground, is the height of the animal at the shoulder." Stout, deep-bodied, short-legged, broad-backed elephants are the ones to choose; lanky, long-legged, narrow animals are of much less value. Before purchasing an elephant you should examine his back most closely; if the back shows marks of great sores that have been operated on, do not pay a high price. An elephant given to sore back is almost useless for a howdah. No elephant should ever get a sore back: the injury comes from using guddies not properly made and fitted to the back. I will notice this point when I come to "Guddies."

It is a great thing to have fast elephants with easy paces; these of course are easily found out if you know anything about the animals. If there is any deficiency about the nails or the appearance of the tail, it should affect the price. A little experience soon makes a man a judge of age; you can tell nothing from the teeth, but the appearance of an old elephant's head is very different from a young one's, and old elephants invariably are slow; you can at once tell if the animal goes à naturally quick pace or whether it is got out of him with difficulty by his driver. The temper is a great matter, but you can only find that out, like the courage of the animal, by experience, after some time. Occasionally elephants get demoralized, and for a time are cowardly; but under good management they will often regain their courage,

if ever they possessed it. What is real courage in an elephant I cannot exactly determine. The little hairy elephant which died was considered exceedingly plucky at tigers, but one day it ran away for two miles, with me on its back, from a jungle-hen; my very staunchest elephant bolted once several times from a rat, which came at it angrily squeaking, with its back up and fur standing on end.

Letter No. 21.

Borrowed Elephants.—Mahouts and Mates.—Sowdaugor Mahout. His pluck somewhat embarrassing.—Cost of keeping Elephants.—Dull-grass bheels. Dry districts.—Food. Cost varies.—Elephants delicate animals.—Death of "Jaboona."—Eating earth.—Sore eyes. Sore backs.

If you have no elephants of your own you will have to borrow or hire them as best you can. When you keep elephants you will find it easy to obtain the services of a few more baggage- or beating-elephants; your mahouts will know about all other elephants in the neighbourhood, what work they may be employed on, and when and how they may be most quickly got at. Zemindars and traders generally lend elephants willingly to such English sportsmen as treat them kindly and liberally; you must pay for their keep and the wages of the attendants when with you, and give a suitable backsheish when you send them back. It is not very easy to get elephants lent to you to go to distant expeditions. I found it best to obtain the loan of elephants from owners who lived near the country to be hunted; this could only be done where you yourself were well known from having been in the country before, or through the agency of sporting friends and planters in the neighbourhood.

I have heard that elephants could be hired in Sylhet by the week or month. I never had any offered to me, and I never knew any sportsman who regularly hired elephants.

My nazir at Noakholly had a male elephant which was always at my disposal, and was, indeed, kept by me for ten out of twelve months in the year. The animal added much to the nazir's dignity; he lent it at times for processions and journeys, but the keep was more than he could well afford: I generally kept it, fed it, and paid the attendants. Both the mahout and the elephant died when I was at Noakholly, and I missed it greatly during my last season.

Each elephant requires two attendants, the mahout and his mate. A good mahout is very hard indeed to get: the best I had stayed with me only for

two seasons; he could always obtain service and high wages in his own district, and so declined to serve at a distance from it. My next best, Sowdaugor, was a man who had many good qualities; he was insanely plucky; he would go at anything, take his elephant up to a tiger or rhinoceros in a foolishly reckless manner, urge his elephant down most dangerous declivities, through any jungle or under any trees. He constantly put me into most unpleasant situations; once he put me almost under a tiger. I had told him always to keep on the top of a nullah's bank, and not to descend to the bottom, thereby preventing me from getting a shot or knowing what the animals we were after might be doing. Nevertheless, once when we started two, if not three, tigers at once from the carcase of a fresh-killed cow, he charged down among them to the bottom of the nullah. I found my head just level with a large tiger's feet; I could have touched the tiger with a hog-spear, but I had to hold on to the howdah with both hands; the tiger sprung away luckily, but the result was that we lost one if not two tigers, and only killed the one that was wounded by a shot fired when we first disturbed the animals.

Sowdaugor was honest, kind to his elephant (which he never neglected), trustworthy, and truthful; but he was almost a fool, had no common sense, and was most easily imposed on; if not well looked after, other mahouts (and mahouts generally are a rascally set) made a tool of him. He was singularly calm and quiet when waiting for a tiger, though he well knew it was a very fierce one. His elephant trusted him entirely; she would put up her trunk and take hold of his hand, and having done this she was satisfied and steady with him, with another mahout she would be nervous. By thus keeping steady and quiet I was enabled always to shoot at the right moment and effectively, and so neither Sowdaugor nor his elephant ever got hurt during the nine years he guided my best howdah-elephant.

Elephants are always steadiest with their own mahouts; but I constantly made Sowdaugor drive any elephant I might have my howdah upon when I considered the elephant's own mahout was not to be trusted for a scrimmage. It is a most satisfactory thing to have an elephant and a mahout you can thoroughly rely on in a fight with a tiger.

However steady and courageous elephants may be in general, there are times and occasions when the best elephants become nervous and disgrace themselves by cowardice. If at the first finding of a fighting tiger the greater number of elephants, led probably by a bad elephant guided by a cowardly mahout, turn tail and bolt and show great fear, a staunch and usually reliable elephant may be infected with fear also, and suspecting something more dreadful than usual, may decline to stand firm and for a time insist on keeping with his companions. Instances of this demoralization of my own best elephants will be given among my tiger-shooting adventures.

A good mahout should always keep his elephant in line, restricting his

paces when the other elephants are not equally fast, and keeping his animal well up to the others if they should happen to go faster than his own usual beating-pace; he should have a silent method of pointing out game to the gentleman shooting from the howdah above, and avoid all shouting and unnecessary noise. I used to guide Sowdaugor silently with the finger of my right hand applied gently behind his ear, in exactly the same way as I wished him to guide his elephant with his foot; and when I wanted him to press on I pushed him gently exactly on the back of his head midway between his ears, and when I put my hand on his forehead he knew I meant him to stop. All this could be done without a word, when any noise might have spoilt an opportunity or attracted undesirable attention.

A mahout should not stop his elephant abruptly when he sees a deer just in front or when a partridge rises; the effect of such stoppage is that the man in the howdah gets thrown forward and bumps against the front bar, and thus has the worst possible chance for a good shot. Probably the shooter will see the game as quickly as the mahout, as his point of view is some six feet higher. You should learn to shoot rather quickly and from an elephant while moving with steady and regular steps; the art is easily acquired. If necessary you can stand with your left knee touching the front of your howdah, and the calf of your right leg lightly touching the seat; this will steady you quite sufficiently. Look keenly at the bird or exact place you desire to hit, often somewhat in front of the game itself, and the instant the properly fitting weapon covers this point pull the trigger: by practice I managed to shoot very nearly as well off a moving elephant as I could on foot.

The cost of keeping an elephant varies with the seasons and with the districts where he may be kept. For about three months or a little more (that is, during and for a short time after the rains in the extensive dull-grass bheels of Mymensing, Rungpore, and a few other districts) elephants may be turned loose, or only hobbled, to feed in these bheels day and night; they revel in living in water about five feet deep, which bears thick matted crops of luxuriant coarse green grass. An elephant seems able to feed everlastingly. In such bheels he will get fat and round in a few weeks and improve greatly in appearance; he requires no other food and hardly any attention. At this season if you can send your elephants to such bheels you may give some of your mahouts leave, and make the remainder of your establishment look after all the elephants; and for these months your elephants should cost you no more than the pay of the reduced number of attendants.

Such bheels abound in the Dacca district; but in the Dacca pheelkhana, or elephant barrack, where all the Government Khedda establishment may be located, in addition to the animals kept by zemindars, planters, and sportsmen, there may be from two hundred to three hundred elephants to be fed. The supplying this army of devouring animals has given rise to a regular

trade, and boats and grass-cutters supply the elephants with grass; and the owners of the boats pay a royalty to the zemindars from whose bheels they procure supplies. In Mymensing and parts of Tippera and Chittagong no such expenditure was necessary.

In the dry season, and near most stations where you probably have to be located, the cost of an elephant is much greater; you will then have to give him a certain amount of rice, unhusked, and feed him on plantain-trees and branches of fig- and other trees, bamboo-leaves, and such eatable grass as may be procurable.

When first I kept elephants I was persuaded to do as many others did—to feed them on husked rice, which was placed in little folded bags of plantain-stalks and placed in their mouths. This was humbug; in my absence the mahouts used most of this rice for their own curries. Elephants no more require their food to be put in their mouths than horses do, nor do they require their rice to be husked; unhusked rice is better for them and is about half the price. I used to have this rice put before them in any dry place, and they would eat every grain. In hard work an elephant may require twenty pounds of rice a day, but most zemindarry elephants do without any. Generally plantain or banana trees may be got for nothing; they only bear fruit once, and after that are useless: sometimes you will have to pay a little for them. Where proper trees abound the elephants should be fed on their branches. But some of the fig tribe are in the spring unwholesome: the elephants greedily devour these trees; but at that season it is said that this food gives a disease of the eyes: it is certain that this disease is very common in May and June.

When grass or plantains and suitable trees are not to be got it is hardly possible to keep elephants at all. Mahouts are not to be trusted with money when at a distance from their masters: hence it happened that many friends asked me to arrange at times for the keep of their elephants; and thus I generally had some elephants at my command whose keep cost me nothing, and who greatly assisted in my hog-hunting and shooting undertakings.

I do not think I ever paid more than thirty rupees per month for the keep of an elephant, and in June that cost was often reduced to ten rupees.

Elephants gain and lose condition and flesh very rapidly. You may start on a month's shikar expedition with your elephants all round and sleek; if they have been really hard worked they will probably return showing their ribs and very different in appearance. A few weeks' rest and a continuance of abundant good food will soon restore them if their backs have not been injured: if large sores come on their backs they occasion pain and exhaust the system, in which case the elephant will continue to fall off; it should then be taken from all work and sent, if possible, to a dull-bheel, or to some place where he can be idle and feed all day long.

Elephants are delicate animals; they often ail and often die after short illnesses. The male elephant belonging to the Nazir of Noakholly and two very valuable females of my own died while in my possession, though it is stated that the life of an elephant should average one hundred years.

One forenoon I was sitting in court at Noakholly, when "Teek khubber" (*i. e.* reliable information) was brought to me of a tiger in a place not far distant, which I knew well. I could not then leave office; so I sent my jemmadar to my house, with orders to take the elephants which were handy and the howdah and guns to a village, and to order my horse to come to my office at about 3 P.M. Soon after that time I closed the court and cantered over to the place. The tiger turned out to be a leopard. I disposed of him in about half an hour, and immediately rode home as fast as I could, as a storm from the north-west, an ordinary "nor'-wester," was coming on. The storm passed; it rained and hailed most heavily; but the clouds cleared off, and in the lovely evening which followed, when all nature seemed refreshed, I rode out again to meet the returning elephants. I at once saw there was one wanting. On asking after "Jaboona," I was told that in the middle of the thunderstorm she stopped, quietly lay down, and died almost immediately; I rode on and saw her dead on the plain, and had to give orders for her instant burial. This was a great loss to me in those early days.

Very often it will be reported to you that an elephant is eating earth. This is a sign that something is wrong: possibly it may be only worms; these are supposed to be expelled by eating earth. Sometimes it means that fever is coming on. The pulse of a middle-aged elephant should beat about forty-five times to the minute; if the pulsation increases to about seventy-five or eighty the animal has decided fever. You feel the pulse of the elephant at the lower back part of the ear: I have known elephants bled here, but I never had my own bled. As an aperient an ounce and a half of cotton-oil seed is given. For apparent gripes, opium, assafœtida, and ginger are given in equal quantities; the amount is generally about two rupees weight of each.

Elephants are very subject to sore eyes. In May this is said to be brought on by eating branches of *Ficus indicus* and other fig-trees with milky sap in them. The simplest treatment is a lotion of two grains of sulphate of copper and one grain of sulphate of zinc to an ounce of water; but if the cornea becomes opaque, it is best to touch it once with a stick of lunar caustic. This must be done cautiously. The elephant should be made to sit down, the trunk should be held on one side, and the eye touched. Most probably the animal, whose mahout should be on his neck, will instantly rise, and swinging round its trunk, strike your arm. This happened to me; but the elephant closed its eyelids fast on the caustic and for a moment or two held on, so that when the caustic dropped the lids were over-cauterized.

The following is a receipt for sores on the back which have been operated

upon:—Burn some alum; then rub down equal parts of this alum and blue-stone till smooth, with double weight of turpentine, and mix into an ointment with sweet oil and bees'-wax; this should be spread on the sore. This recipe keeps off flies; but I found the sores often troublesome to heal, and generally found cold-water cloths and an occasional touching of the parts with caustic as good as any other treatment. No elephant of my own ever had a sore back. I rejected several brought for purchase because their backs were not quite sound; but numbers sent to me as baggage-elephants or beaters had sore backs.

Letter No. 22.

Accidents with male Elephants. Cutting tusks.—Building a howdah. Obtain a pattern, try it, and improve on it. Should be strong and light, with iron-work of the best description. Further particulars.—Ammunition-pouches. Seats. Chairs. Charbund.

Many accidents having happened in my early experience with male elephants, I never bought any. At Mymensing there were two males had an antipathy against each other: one the instant it saw the other (on which was a howdah with a friend of mine in it) rushed at the elephant and knocked him clean down; my friend and his attendant and all the guns were sent flying on to the ground; luckily, no harm was done; but deer-shooting, I saw a male elephant sit down on a native, trample on him, and kill him. When beginning a day's shooting at Zaroorgunge, on the confines of Tippera and Chittagong, I shot a barking-deer almost at the very commencement. A man got down to pick the deer up, when a male elephant ran at him and apparently caught him with his tusks and annihilated him; luckily the thorny brushwood was thick; the mahout rammed in the iron goad and took the elephant to a distance, when to our surprise the man came out of the thorns, much scratched, but not otherwise seriously hurt. It was a wonderful escape. As this was a well-known vicious elephant, we declined to allow him ever to come to our hunts in Tippera or Noakholly; he was a useful animal for carrying tents.

These nervous badly-disposed elephants seem to get furiously excited when any animal is killed. Elephants are much disposed to kick when you are padding a dead tiger, and it is advisable for a European at such moments to keep at a distance from their legs. Very many elephants will not allow a dead tiger to be placed on their backs at all.

The tusks of male elephants grow till they become obstructive. When too long, from a fourth to a third of the tusk is sawn off; the animal makes no

AN ELEPHANT & HOWDAH

opposition to this. I have seen at least a dozen tusks thus shortened. Occasionally a female elephant breaks its own short tusks off. I have portions of both male and female tusks beside me now.

Much of your comfort in shooting from an elephant will depend on your howdah. There is great diversity in the make, shape, and weight of howdahs. Do not think of having one made by the carriage-makers of Calcutta; they will build you a great heavy thing which will cost you half the price of a buggy, and which most likely you will never be able to keep even on the guddy: their ideas are taken from howdahs used by governor-generals and high potentates, intended to hold three or four people, and to be used on huge male elephants nine feet high.

A good sporting howdah should be very strong, as light as is compatible with certain strength, and as small in length and breadth as may be convenient and pleasant for yourself and one attendant, and fitted to hold four double-barrelled guns or rifles, and the ammunition and apparatus and appurtenances which experience shows are required in tiger-shooting.

I found different kinds and shapes of howdahs in different parts of Eastern Bengal; but I had received my first notion of what a good howdah should be from the judge of Rajshahye, who had been a noted sportsman from his first start in Bengal, and had shot with all the best sportsmen of his day. I thought I improved on this pattern, but substantially I adhered to it in the many howdahs which I built for myself and friends. I always kept two —one for myself and one for a guest. These howdahs were much sought after, and were purchased the moment I determined to build a new one. It is absolutely necessary, if you wish to take advantage of all chances for good sport, whether you own elephants or not, that you should have a howdah and ropes, and I may add that a guddy and guddela are almost indispensable too.

Your best plan will be to purchase a howdah as soon as you can from some well-known tiger-shooting sportsman; after having shot in this for a season, you will know your requirements, and by comparing your own with other howdahs, you will have data for building an improved one on your own ideas.

I give a drawing of my elephant and an old howdah from a photograph; the details being exact, I have not attempted to alter them. The photograph was taken about 1864. The howdah is sufficiently good for you to take as a pattern to start by; in reality it is an excellent howdah, and one from which I had capital sport. The guddy was not one of my shikarry howdah-guddies; it was a baggage-guddy: a good howdah-guddy would have raised the howdah about five inches. The charbund on this particular howdah was peculiar, it is attached to two rings placed much too high up: this was an experiment which I did not approve of after practice; there should be one strong ring for the charbund much lower on the howdah, and near where the

rings are now shown there should have been a square partition without cane-work*. You climb into the howdah by putting first your hand into this partition, and then you step on it, and so climb over the upper bar. The portrait of the elephant is perfect; my tent and the tree are well drawn.

You will, when about to build a howdah, secure the services of the best station carpenter and the best worker in iron you can procure, and you should have the howdah built at your own house and under your own eye. The wood must be chosen with great care; it must be sound and well-seasoned. The principal lower parts of the howdah must be strong, and weight may be here disregarded; the superstructure must be of strong light wood. The iron-work connected with the fastening-on of the howdah must be of the very best well-tempered metal; all rings, chains, and bars should be most carefully tested. If any of the iron-work connected with the fastenings should give way in a scrimmage with a fighting tiger, the consequences might be most disastrous: the turnover of a howdah on an ordinary occasion is serious enough, but if it should happen at a critical moment, loss of life might ensue, and, at the least, the whole party would be thrown into great confusion; the other elephants would most probably take fright and misbehave, and the sportsmen would have to give up the contest with the tiger or rhinoceros, and attend to the safety of their prostrate comrade.

There must be a bar of light iron in front of the howdah for you to hold on by; this will have indentations to hold the ends of your guns when resting beside you: the bar should be covered with list, and this again with stout leather; it should be continued backwards on each side for about a foot, so as to make a convenient handle to help you in getting into the howdah. There should be no door and no projections, such as steps, outside your howdah; steps are much in the way and of no use. There should be an open space in the cane-work, into which you can place your foot; this is much better than a step. The support for your back when you are sitting on the seat should be of leather, or of girth-web attached to rings fastened to the side; but the back of the attendant's seat should be made of the same stout strong wood as the rest of the howdah. In a difficulty you will cling to the front bar, your attendant to the side of the howdah behind you.

For the purpose of carrying your ammunition, bullets, cartridges, &c., you should fasten a broad piece of leather across the whole front of the howdah, about ten inches broad; on this should be sewn four leather pouches, capacious enough to hold all you require: this I found to be far superior to the common wooden box with partitions, in which everything rattled and made a most objectionable noise. The seat should be strong, the centre cane-work like a chair: on each side of this cane-work there should be rests for the stocks of your guns; these should be carefully made so as to prevent the guns wabbling about. The ends of the muzzles of the weapons should rest

* An attempt has been made to alter this slightly in engraving from the photograph.

in notches in the front bar; the muzzles should not project far beyond the bar. Under your seat you should have a place to put things in, such as gun-covers, small game (say partridges), and odds and ends, such as biscuits, oranges, or sandwiches; a smaller open box should be under your attendant's boarded seat, which must be as narrow as will suffice for him to sit on. All the open spaces between the framework should be closed in with good cane-work made with Chinese cane; native cane is not to be recommended.

The height of the front bar from the bottom of the howdah depends on the height of the sportsman who is to shoot from it. A man of short stature cannot shoot over a high bar; a very tall man feels, when the elephant stops suddenly, that a low bar may throw him clean over the elephant's head; you will easily arrange this for yourself. From the strong wooden bars on each side which form the base of the howdah depend two chains, connected with a bar a little more than a foot long. The temper and strength of this iron-work, and the security of its fastening to the wood-work, are the most important matters to be attended to in making a howdah. You should observe these chains and these fastenings in the howdahs of your friends most carefully, and be extremely particular as to these points when building your own howdah. Besides these chief iron-work arrangements, there is another ring which is fixed to an upper wooden bar, for the rope called the "charbund," which is used to tighten the thick girth-ropes which go under the elephant's belly. The "charbund" is most useful, and without it it is almost impossible to keep the howdah straight and level, or on what sailors call "an even keel." The howdah of an experienced intelligent sportsman keeps even throughout a long day's shikar, to the comfort not only of the elephant, but of the whole party. The badly fitted howdah of the inexperienced sportsman on his borrowed zemindarry elephant and guddy is continually toppling half over; he constantly has to call on the whole line to stop and wait till his howdah is put straight again. Nothing conduces so much to spoil the pleasure of the most enjoyable beats as this having continually to stop and put howdahs straight.

Some howdahs are boarded at the bottom for you to stand on: I am not partial to these; they seem nice for the first hour or two, but your feet soon ache on the boards, and if with a badly made guddy they come down on the elephant's backbone they will give rise to sore backs and abscesses.

At one side of the howdah inside there should be a loop to hold a hatchet or dao; this is continually required for cutting branches, and occasionally for cutting off the heads of buffaloes and sambhur deer. If you use a muzzle-loader, there should be another loop through which to pass the loading-rod.

With these instructions, after one season's experience with any howdah you may be able to get, I think you should be able to build a howdah exactly to suit yourself. A good howdah should last for many years, and always

command a ready sale should you desire to part with it. I dare say I made a dozen during my Indian career, and when their sale is taken into consideration I do not think they cost me a penny; I built them entirely with regard, first, to strength, next, to lightness, and, lastly, to personal comfort.

Letter No. 23.

The Guddy. Should be stuffed with Solah. Keep a good one. Borrowed guddies very inferior.—Howdah-ropes. Guddela. Remarks on howdahs. Small howdah.—Charjamehs.—The battery. Smooth bores as useful as rifles. As much as possible have all weapons of the same bore. Bullets.

It is most important that all howdahs should be placed on properly made guddies, or cushions. For carrying baggage, natives, or dead game, a very inferior guddy may suffice; but no elephant can carry the howdah even and properly, and no sportsman can enjoy a comfortable day's shooting, if his howdah rests on a bad guddy. The best guddies are made of solah, the pith-plant from which solah topees are made. The solah plant is abundant in all the zillahs where I kept elephants; it should be gathered and your guddies made, and extra solah stacked for use, in the autumn. The guddy-case is made of the very stoutest and best gunny-bag cloth that you can obtain: you should spare no trouble to get this sacking really good; inferior gunny cloth will scarcely stand the wear and tear of one month's shikar, and good sacking will last two seasons. The case will be made by the mahout according to the length and breadth of his elephant's back. It is then stuffed with solah till it is as hard as a board. It is then worked and used and trod upon till the stuffing gets squeezed together, when fresh solah is crammed in till it will hold no more; it will then be nearly a foot in thickness on all the four edges, with an opening in the middle for the elephant's spinal ridge to play without pressure on it. This great clumsy-looking affair if made of solah is extremely light, and yet very stiff and rigid.

Inferior guddies, and all that you will be able to procure from natives who lend their elephants, are made of thatching-grass; this is stuffed into cases as the solah is, but it does not form nearly so good a stuffing, is very heavy, fully ten times as heavy as solah, and imbibes and retains for a long time all water, whether this comes from rain or from crossing deep nullahs; and if this grass stuffing remains wet for many nights, the gunny cloth case quickly rots. A guddy does not cost much; it is quite worth while to have your howdah-guddies made of the best possible description.

The howdah is fastened on to the elephant above the guddy by three

ropes—one a thick long rope, almost a cable, which passes several times over the iron bar and under the belly, called the belly-rope, and two smaller ropes, the charbunds, which are used to tighten the thick belly-rope and keep it taut. Elephant-ropes are all made specially for the purpose; the best are of cotton, and are rather expensive, a set costing about twenty rupees. A common set of hempen ropes made by the mahouts will not cost a tenth that cotton ropes do. Cotton ropes are extremely pliable and easily managed; they can be fastened tighter and quicker. The hempen ropes are stiff and difficult to tighten, hurt the mahout's hands, and require tightening oftener than cotton. I always had my ropes made at Dacca of good cotton. When an elephant is lent he usually comes to you with a bad guddy; you must almost always supply your own howdah and ropes, and you will find it pay, even if you have no elephant of your own, to keep a good guddy too. Cotton charbund ropes, which are thin and easily got, may be used advantageously with hempen ropes.

Between the belly-rope and the elephant's belly you should place a wide piece of hide, half a large one or the whole of a small one. This is requisite to prevent the rope chafing the elephant's chest.

Between the guddy and the elephant's back there should be placed the guddela. This is a quilt made of "dosooti" cloth, with thick strips of jute sewn into it; it is a kind of elephant saddle-cloth. Many sportsmen use another guddela between the top of the guddy and the howdah; I always did, it saved the gunny cloth and the guddy from chafing, and was pleasant to stand upon.

The above directions as to elephant-gear are made after more than twenty years' practical experience. You will not be able, I think, to procure exactly the same gear as I used at once; but I believe most of the tiger-shooting sportsmen in Eastern Bengal will agree with my notions, though, as a rule, I found the howdahs in Dacca and Purneah heavier and larger than my own. Some had doors, which I found most highly objectionable; some had projecting steps, which were always causing mishaps. Some had fixed wooden chair-backs to the centre seats, against which I constantly hurt myself; some had one box fixed in front, some a series of small boxes hooked on to the front. In fact there was very great diversity. I have given you the opinion I formed after careful study, and I never met any one who had made more howdahs nor thought over them more than myself.

It is possible to make quite a small howdah fitted for the sportsman alone, without any attendant; this would be suitable for a small elephant where no ordinary howdah-elephant could be obtained. I only once met with one of these; it was made by a clever officer quartered at Chittagong, who had attached to it a sort of windlass and pin arrangement for fastening and tightening the belly-band. I am unable to say how this diminutive howdah and its dodges answered in actual shikar.

There is a thing called a "charjameh," a kind of Irish jaunting-car arrangement, on which two or more men sit back to back, which is fastened on to the guddy; this is much used for travelling. A charjameh is difficult to shoot from, except towards one particular direction, and should never be used when a howdah can be obtained.

Most men take four double-barrelled weapons in their howdahs, whatever kind of sport they may be working at. Of course men differ very greatly as to what weapons they should use; some are partial to rifles for all distances. I knew a very distinguished Bengal sportsman who, when he went tiger-shooting or, as it was sometimes called, ball-shooting, took four of the best double-barrelled rifles he could get from England. The first thing he did was to knock away with a hammer all "those blooming sights"; they interfered with his shooting, and with the plain rib of his rifle he said he could shoot confidently at any distance from five yards to two hundred. He was not a brilliant shot and cared nothing for smooth-bore or shooting with small shot; but I dare say in his day he shot three tigers for one I did. Some men prefer to shoot only with smooth-bores and muzzle-loaders. The modern breech-loaders I suppose are now the favourites; but it is allowed, I believe, that a smooth-bore breech-loader does not carry a ball as well as the old copper cap muzzle-loader did. I will tell you what I did. For the first eleven years of my howdah-shooting I took in my howdah one gun by Dickson of Edinburgh, one Joe Manton which had been converted from a tube-gun, one gun by Sam Smith, formerly of Princes Street, London; these were all smooth-bore muzzle-loaders of the same bore, twelves, and carried number 14 balls sewn into waxed cloth. My fourth weapon was a rifle by Westley Richards, a polygroove, which carried an ounce spherical ball.

Experience in shooting from a howdah taught me that most tigers and sambhur and bears and all deer and leopards were shot by me within seventy or eighty yards distance, and that for such shooting a smooth-bore was as good as a rifle, and indeed, seeing that you could shoot so much quicker with a familiar ordinary gun, better than a rifle. It is next to impossible to "draw a head" properly with a rifle from the back of an elephant. The animal will move a little; you must shoot somewhat quickly, that is you cannot take steady aim as when shooting on foot. For these reasons my old sporting friend knocked off his rifle-sights; for the same reason I took three smooth-bores and only one rifle with me in the howdah. The rifle was for long shots beyond one hundred yards, and many and many a good long shot I made with a rifle from the howdah, and many and many a miss.

From 1861, however, when I had several breech-loaders and had sold my first battery, my howdah armament was somewhat different; I had a pair of muzzle-loading smooth-bores by Dickson, a breech-loading rifle by Sam Smith (a lovely weapon), and a double smooth-bore breech-loader. Sometimes I used a breech-loader rifle by Smith and sometimes one by Daw; and very

often the Smith rifle was changed for a very favourite rifle by Daw, mentioned in earlier pages as the Daw-Jacob rifle. In muzzle-loaders it is very important to have all the guns in your howdah of one bore. If by accident you ram a number 12 bullet into a number 14 bore you will find it stick, and when in a scrimmage unutterable grief and vexation may ensue, as perhaps I may relate when I come to tales about tiger-shooting on the banks of the Brahmapootra river.

Of course the exact battery to be taken out would depend on the nature of the sport to be expected. For tiger-shooting, and when shooting at insignificant game and feather was prohibited for the early part of the day at least, I took the two muzzle-loading smooth-bores, a breech-loading rifle, and a breech-loading gun; the latter to be loaded at first with ball as useful after the other six barrels should have been exploded, and for quick firing, if such should be required, after all the other weapons had been discharged.

But for junglefowl-shooting in the Tippera hills I took three shot guns and one rifle, the latter in case a tiger, leopard, or large deer should be roused. I always had a supply of ball-cartridges and bullets sewn in cloth which could be utilized with smooth-bores after a few minutes' loading operations. I always kept two hundred number 14 bullets in store, properly sewn into American cotton cloth. If preparing for a long expedition where ball-shooting was likely to be attended with a great expenditure of bullets, double the number were prepared. These bullets fitted all the smooth-bores and the cartridges for the smooth-bore breech-loaders; but for the rifles, accurately-fitting bullets without cloth were used; and as it is probable that much information as to breech-loading weapons and the bullets proper for them has been gained by sportsmen since I left Bengal, it would be well if you obtained instructions and information on this point from the best of the Calcutta gun-makers.

I never found it necessary to use bullets hardened with tin nor explosive shells; with the exception of rhinoceros and buffalo, there is no animal which you will meet with in Eastern Bengal which requires a deadlier missile than an ordinary spherical bullet. My experiences with rhinoceroses are very limited; they will be detailed under the head of rhinoceros-shooting. All my execution was done with a spherical bore. But in the matter of buffaloes I shall have much to say hereafter. An old wild buffalo bull is the most dangerous animal in Bengal to tackle either on foot or on horseback; his hide is of the toughest: when possible I brought the Daw-Jacob rifle to play upon him with a peculiar bullet weighing about two ounces; this was sufficiently effective. For buffalo-shooting you should certainly use very heavy bullets, and the nearer you get to the animal the better.

Letter No. 24.

Tents. Boats. Cost of tents.—Learn necessary arrangements for a Shikar party. Much to be thought of; considerable difficulty in giving satisfaction.—Do not organize parties for too many sportsmen. Difficulties increase with numbers. Water must be thought of for the whole camp; also supplies.

The best sport in Bengal is obtained when the party camp out in tents at as great a distance from crowded civilized dwelling-places and native sportsmen and shikarries as you can get to, and you must either own or procure somehow tents for yourself and your servants.

The Government do indeed, to a slight extent, profess to supply their officials with tents, and the Collector and Magistrate of each zillah had in my day a tent apiece and utilized old Government tents also; but unless you happen to be the head of the office you will generally find that these tents are wanted by your senior officer, or if you go into the interior of your district on duty you will generally require the limited accommodation you get from the Government tents for official purposes, documents and records, and as a place where the public have a right of access to. You will find it most convenient and almost indispensable to have a separate tent of your own; this you can keep to yourself and send anywhere at any time. The best economy is to purchase a new proper tent at once; it should last all your time, and if taken care of be worth a considerable sum when you retire.

At Noakholly most of my shikar was got at with the aid of boats. In the river districts boats are nearly as useful as tents; but in most districts and in the best shooting season, when small streams are dry, tents are, as I said, indispensable. A single-poled tent is the most common, but by no means the most commodious kind. A Swiss cottage tent has much more room in it for the sahib than a single-poled tent; there is less convenience for servants, who generally live in the passage between the walls or kunats of a single-poled tent. The proper comfortable way of doing matters is to have a Swiss tent and two sepoys' pāls, one for cooking and mess purposes and one for your servants; these are light and cheap and most useful. At times I have dispensed with the larger tent entirely, and lived for two or three days in one pāl, giving the other to my servants.

In fine weather the servants can do tolerably without tents. Two guddies placed against each other, or a line of guddies placed so as to make a long roof-like shelter, make a very fair sleeping-place for servants and natives as a makeshift. Two fair-sized elephants will carry a Swiss tent and two pāls and a deal of camp furniture easily. The cost of a Swiss tent varies, I believe, from Rs. 300 to 450. It is a great comfort and convenience to have your own private tentage arrangements.

The proper management of a sporting expedition which is to take place at a distance from the station and to last for three or four days requires experience and, if possible, knowledge of the country. As a young inexperienced sportsman you will probably be a guest or be asked to take part as a griff in a party managed by others; and on such occasions you will find that you have a very great deal to learn, and that a properly conducted party entails on the person who undertakes to superintend it much labour and trouble for weeks probably before the actual sport begins. In addition to the actual sport, the manager will have to consider how the sportsmen are to get to the camp; how they are to be accommodated with sleeping-room; what general mess arrangements are necessary; how many ordinary servants will accompany the party; how many horses and syces, how many elephants, mahouts, and mates; how corn, rice, food, firing, drinking-water, bathing-water are to be provided; how vegetables and bread are to be obtained; what proportion of these requirements he, as manager, is to be responsible for, and what peculiar arrangements each member of the party may require for himself. For instance, one man may be a teetotaller, and another decline to drink beer and be satisfied only with claret; some men dislike whisky, and some cannot be happy without soda-water; some members may of necessity have to study the strictest economy, and to others a little more or less expenditure may make no difference. On the successful administration of such matters as these the comfort and satisfaction requisite to ensure agreeable success at a shikar party very greatly depend. If to unsuccessful sport discomfort and difficulty at camp should be added, the whole pleasure of the trip becomes changed to disgust, and nothing but experience and foresight and painstaking arrangement beforehand will prevent possible failure and disappointment. So study these matters as soon as you can; for if you are to be a distinguished sportsman you will have ere long to take the command yourself. Very likely you know or may hear of that notable party who, on meeting at their camp after a long journey, were met by their servants (who knew every thing and had acted for them) with the report that there was plenty of game, and every thing had arrived safely, and all was "bhōt atcha," but accidentally the powder had been left behind! The manager of course, if there is one, should remember every thing; but it is as well that you should see after your own interests too yourself, even when not manager.

A party consisting of a moderate number of sportsmen, servants, elephants, and horses may be easily managed where an expedition on an extended scale becomes a matter of much difficulty; for instance, I have often had splendid sport at places with a moderate-sized party where every single thing, drinking-water for Europeans included, had to be brought once for all from headquarters, where twelve elephants and their attendants could only with difficulty find food and shelter, and where a proper encampment and entertainment for a large party, consisting, say, of from eight to ten gentlemen,

requiring twenty-five elephants and every thing in the same proportion, could not possibly have met together for four days' sport at all. At Chur Siddhee, and when shooting in the Backergunge Soonderbund, near the shore of the Bay of Bengal, good fresh drinking-water was not to be got; every drop had to be brought from headquarters. And again and again, when shooting with only twelve elephants, camp has had to be shifted because there was not sufficient forage for this number of elephants after three days' consumption. Hence it becomes almost impossible in many places, most excellent for sport, to organize an expedition for a large number of sportsmen requiring the assistance of a corresponding proportion of elephants, horses, and attendants.

For a large hog-hunting party, where from six to a dozen men may be expected to join, or for a shooting-expedition for miscellaneous sport, where a general holiday-gathering from headquarters may be expected, a well-known meet, where a neighbouring bazaar affords convenience for natives to obtain food and sleeping-room and milk for Europeans, where rice and plantain-trees for elephants are in plenty, and to which a daily dawk-messenger from the station may, in the course of an eight hours' walk, bring letters, papers, bread, butter, and vegetables, should be selected; and for such a meet the station folk would be full of experience of past gatherings. But for a distant or a new country, or for one where supplies may be scarce and where the experience of former encampments may not be obtainable, you should restrict the number of the sporting party to four or less.

Whenever I organized a party for howdah-shooting I never asked more than three companions; sometimes I had two, very often only one. Perhaps I was as often alone as accompanied by any other sportsman. Generally the large hog-hunting parties at which I attended were got up by others; the smaller ones in Noakholly and Mymensing I managed myself.

The encampment must always be pitched near water. In Tippera, Chittagong, and Noakholly there are beautiful large tanks, surrounded with high embankments and covered with thick jungle, often well stocked with jungle-fowl, barking-deer, and a few leopards, and ornamented with old picturesque trees. In other zillahs, especially in the churs and hog-hunting districts, the camp used to be pitched on the side of small natural lakes, supplied by the overflow of the Ganges and other large streams, where the exit of water was prevented by natural or artificial mud embankments. Such extensive areas of water induced colonies of fishermen to locate themselves on their banks. A good supply of fish and plenty of water make commissariat arrangements easy for the manager of a shikar party, and the native servants remain contented in such spots, where they can bathe and buy fish and prawns at half the usual cost, and where fishing-canoes take them to the neighbouring baths or bazaar-markets; whereas in solitary dry spots difficulties and grumblings become the rule.

Letter No. 25.

Shooting in the Doorga-Poojah holidays. These holidays taken by all men. Boats generally used at such times; tents in drier seasons.—Bullocks, carts, and carriage.—Cover your howdahs.—Precautions against storms.—Horses to be stabled in huts.—Go round the camp before going to bed.—Objections to large parties.

The Doorga-Poojah and Dusserah holidays, coming in September and October, are universal native holidays. The civil and revenue courts are shut for at least three weeks, and the criminal courts may be said to be scarcely open; trade and business of all kinds in large towns, such as Calcutta, cease for a time; every body, Christian and Pagan, takes a holiday or pays visits or entertains visitors. Men with a sporting turn of mind arrange for shooting-expeditions. The weather is still uncomfortably hot and damp; all vegetation and herbage is at its rankest, and all jungles are dense with grass, leaves, and weeds, and swarming with ants and insects driven from the soil by the accumulated waters of three months of incessant rain. Hog-hunting is only to be got in a few high places, such as exist in only one or two zillahs. Few men have ridden hogs in October. Snipe-shooting is nearly at its best, and it is at this season that the sport finds its most numerous devotees; and I have often worked the snipe-shooting very hard at such times. But generally, and whenever I possibly could, I managed to get up some tiger-shooting or otherwise an expedition for general shooting at horn, fur, and feather as best I could.

For three seasons I shot tigers in the islands of the Megna in these holidays. Once I joined a hog-hunting party not far from Moorshedabad; six or seven times I worked up the miscellaneous sport in the districts of Mymensing and Dacca; once I spent these holidays on the alluvial plains of the Purneah district; twice I substituted a visit to the great Sonapore fair in Tirhoot instead of the usual sport. This fair is a grand gathering for society, racing, and fun, which no European should omit to go to during his Indian exile. In spite of the fact that this is almost the worst season for sport, when the jungles are unburnt, green, and unbeatable, when the waters have to some extent subsided, and the high places to which game was forced to resort when the rivers were at their fullest have again been abandoned, and access to unlimited grassy plains has again been obtained, yet sportsmen, and especially business men and officials, who now are certain of some leisure, are bound to make the best of the opportunity; and so, in my case at any rate, a great deal in the way of sport was attempted, and pretty generally the expeditions were successful.

At such seasons most of my sport took place not far from rivers. We lived in boats; the elephants were located close to our anchorages. We could

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shoot two or three days at one spot, then order the whole fleet to go to another place six or eight hours' row or sail distant, and shoot to such place on the elephants.

Boats are most convenient for shikar expeditions. One boat can generally accommodate two or three Englishmen and a large number of servants; all provisions for Europeans and natives can be taken on board and fresh supplies obtained from time to time. A separate cook-boat makes a most sufficient kitchen. The best cabin can be used as a mess-room; after sport is over and dinner disposed of the four sportsmen can play a rubber of whist and enjoy themselves as well as in a tent when ground and jungles are drier and more healthy.

I used what were called "coss-boats." These are boats built in the Noakholly district, especially adapted to withstand the storms of the Megna. They had from eight to ten oarsmen and one steerer. They contained two good cabins, and a cupboard sort of place used as a bath-room. If I was on a solitary expedition my man cooked for me on board; if there were three or four of us, and we were not travelling on the broadest and worst part of the Megna, we had a separate cook-boat. Servants, baggage, and all such things could be stowed away in these coss-boats. Friends shooting with me from districts bordering the Ganges generally had boats called "beauleahs:" these were more commodious than coss-boats, but not nearly so fast, and were not fitted for wide stormy waters.

In the winter and spring, when shooting in more inland and dry countries, tents, howdahs, provisions, gun-cases, ammunition, and all requirements must be sent to camp packed partly on elephants and partly on bullock-carts. Carts manage to go nearly straight across country; a sufficiently good track, it can seldom be called a road, can generally be made available. If the carts and elephants get three days' start they will cover a distance sufficient to require several relays of horses if you ride or drive across country. Many gentlemen prefer going to distant camps in palkees and at night.

When sending a howdah on an elephant a long distance it is advisable to have a canvas howdah-cover; this will keep every thing under it dry. If the guns are to be sent in the howdah they should have waterproof cases; any of the heavy storms so common in March make sad havoc with valuable batteries and all the careful adjustments of a howdah if they are unprotected. The elephants often reach camp at dark, and next morning very early sport should recommence. If every thing has to be dried and cleaned and made as spick and span as it ought to be, you and your servants will have hard work in the dark with lights blowing out continually and a raging north-west wind threatening to blow down the tents.

When a storm is expected, and they often occur evening after evening in spring in Eastern Bengal, a trench should be dug round each tent to carry off the water and prevent it flowing into the interior; the earth from this

small trench should be made into a ridge against the outer wall of the tent, and the tent-pegs should be bushed if the pegs are not driven deeply into good firm-holding soil. If the tent should be blown down, or pools of water form in its centre, you will be uncomfortable and bothered; but if proper precautions are taken, you will find the morning after a nor'-wester a delicious change.

When hog-hunting, I advise that the horses should be put into native huts; it guards them against chills and strokes of the wind, and even against attacks of "going in the loins." In the healthy districts horses are often tethered under trees. I have constantly had mine so secured; but they may get wet or loose: I prefer huts. Always in the colder months see that your horses are well clothed at night, and give your syces and grass-cutters blankets for themselves, or the chances are that when about 9.30 P.M. you go, as you should always go, to see that horses and elephants are all right, you will find your syces asleep, wrapped in the blankets that should have been on your horse, who remains shivering in the cold. I do not think a season ever passed in which I did not find this happen to some of the sportsmen at our winter meets.

After a long and hard day's sport, when men, horses, and elephants, exhausted and weary, were taking their well-deserved sleep, I have strolled often from the white shining tents in the still calm moonlight to the cleared space under the fig-trees, and gazed on the horses lying half hidden in the rice-straw litter, with the syces snoring beside them, both protected by the thick black blanket, and then walked a little further and looked on the groups of native attendants closely crowded together under some temporary screen, hardly sufficient to keep off the dew and the glare of the moon. Beyond, one would see the huge elephants, each on its side, with the flat soles of its feet at right angles to the ground, a jackal most likely stealing away at my approach, and an owl shrieking from some not very distant jungle; and I have wished that I were an artist, and could paint such a characteristic scene to hang up at home. You will find it answer to look round the camp at night, and see that all is well before you yourself turn in.

I have at times joined in large parties got up by general subscription; but I am not partial to these. They are composed generally of rather a miscellaneous society, and unless one of the number possesses an undisputed right to control the others, who probably pay just the same amount of subscription, unpleasantness may arise. I have known individuals, by no means the most popular of the members, nor the best sportsmen, nor the best shots, claim and insist on taking up certain positions in the line or stations with reference to the jungle, in a greedy and selfish manner, so as to ensure for themselves better chances than the others for lucky shots; and afterwards boast of their success and represent better men as inferior sportsmen. At times less pushing individuals feel themselves aggrieved and are disgusted at such conduct. It

is better that one of the party should be elected captain, and entrusted with supreme command. For my own part I generally avoided these large parties, being either a guest or subscriber by kindness and sufferance at a small party entirely under the management of my entertainer or inviter, or manager or host myself, when I could choose my two or three companions, and knew that a gentlemanly, unselfish, and sportsmanlike spirit would influence each and all. But at the same time you may not be able to afford to do things with a high hand; and if a good country is to be beaten up by a local party you cannot interfere with it, and it may be necessary for you to join such an expedition and make the best of the circumstances, or you may lose the sport altogether. In all systematically pursued Bengal sport, snipe-shooting excepted, cost and expenditure are elements that demand great, I might almost say the greatest, consideration. A very poor man indeed can hardly enjoy good hog-hunting or tiger-shooting at his own cost, except occasionally and accidentally.

Letter No. 26.

Visits to Zemindars and Planters. Objections to such visits.—Be careful to keep on good terms with Landholders. Consequences of inconsiderate treatment of a native landlord.—Travel at night and save time.—River travelling.—Cooking arrangements. Charcoal. Drinking-water.—Blacksmith and Bheesty.

I have at times been asked to avail myself of the shelter and conveniences supplied at the long-established residences of rich and powerful native zemindars and landlords, or at the houses and factories of indigo-planters or European agents. I seldom availed myself of these invitations, and generally encamped at a distance, and got these gentlemen, if possible, to visit me and partake of my hospitality. I always had the greatest aversion to sponging on landed proprietors. Ever since Lord Clive's time the members of the Bengal Civil Service have been prohibited by covenant from receiving gifts or douceurs from the natives; and it has always been the proud boast of the Haileybury College men that the service of which they were members had been noted as the most pure-handed and incorrupt that had ever administered a Government for a nation; and doubtless the present members of the Indian Civil Service strive to deserve the same reputation; but the conduct of the subordinate native officials, such as amlah, mohurrers, clerks, vakeels, &c., has in no way resembled that of their covenanted superiors in these respects. The visit of a junior inexperienced Government official, with his office and official attendants, to the immediate vicinity of the most influential landholder

of the neighbourhood acts as a heavy fine. The zemindar probably has to fee each attendant and subordinate officer highly, otherwise he suffers in innumerable petty matters as well as in general native estimation. As a young member of an honourable service you are bound, as much as lies in your power, to avoid causing such inflictions as these. This is not exactly a sporting subject, so I will not enlarge upon it further than by the above reference.

It is true that the great resident influential landlords, to whom the jungles that you beat belong, and the planters, who are far more intimate with the agricultural population than the Government officials, who usually reside at the largest towns in the district, must know a great deal more about the game and sport in their own neighbourhood than you can at a first visit, and have it in their power to assist you, and also most easily to thwart and check all information, and so interfere greatly with your success. It should be your aim to obtain the advantage of all their knowledge and assistance without putting them to expense and inconvenience. If you are popular, and they observe that you are favourable to their interests and do your best to prevent imposition and extortion, you will be welcome, and the chief residents will do all in their power to assist you. If, on the other hand, you take as much out of these persons as you can, and allow your attendants to do the same, your visits will be regarded as a curse, and sport as an inducement for such visits will be fatally frustrated.

I know an instance where a fine hospitable Brahmin zemindar, who always endeavoured to show the best sport and offered great hospitality to well-behaved European officials who treated him well, had his kindness abused by an ill-conditioned subaltern, who lived at his expense, and worked his elephants and servants cruelly and without recompense to such an extent, that the zemindar turned all his dependants nearly into shikarries and made them shoot constantly, giving them all his elephants to beat and supplying ammunition; and in two years one of the best sporting districts I ever knew was quite ruined and, for as long as my knowledge of it lasted, rendered not worth visiting at all. On finding this splendid country devoid of game, I carefully questioned my friend the Brahmin as to the reason; and he gave it me; and I knew it was true. He offered to do his best to get up sport again for me if I desired it; but I was in a high Government situation at the time, and it would not have been correct for me to have entered into any such agreement. Twenty years earlier, in the remote district of Noakholly, when newspaper correspondents were less venomous and mischievous, I might have tried, had I been likely to have remained long in those parts, to have got up sport again by preservation.

I obtained many a day's sport, especially after wildfowl, and occasional howdah-shooting by boat-travelling at night. After office closed, say at 5 P.M., all arrangements having been carefully made beforehand, and after

partaking of an early dinner, I used to embark on a coss-boat, often from my house, which was near the river, and sometimes after a drive or a ride to where the boat might be; at once the rowers were called on to do their best and to continue working hard all night, till the rendezvous was reached. But the rate of boat-travelling varies greatly and has to be considered. With the tide, or down a fairly rapid stream, a rate of six miles an hour or so may be maintained for twelve or fourteen hours, and I very constantly managed from forty to fifty miles between leaving office and the time for commencing sport next day. Moonlight and other things make considerable difference; wind also may be useful or hindering. Against stream and tide progress is very different. Coss-boats, and indeed most boats, proceed up-stream by "gooning;" that is, the mast is erected, a rope or ropes are stretched from the mast-head and attached to pieces of stout bamboo, these are held over the shoulders of the rowers walking on the shore, and with this peculiar arrangement the boat is towed along. Continual stoppages are the rule when gooning at night, especially if it is dark. The crossing of streams running into the river you are travelling along occasions great delay. All craft not travelling at night are moored to the river-bank or in some crevice, and you have to pass the gooning-rope over the masts of these boats. Shallows and all manner of obstacles are not easily avoided on dark nights; and with one drawback and another your progress against wind, tide, or stream seldom exceeds two and a half miles of waterway. If the river winds about much you will not find yourself above fifteen or twenty miles from your starting-place when the time for sport arrives: there is no help for this; you must make the best of streams and the winds, and daylight and moonlight, and take all these contingencies into consideration when laying out your plans.

Sometimes you may take advantage of a river-steamer, and by sending your boat ahead a day before it can meet you at some fitting point on the river.

You can sleep and eat comfortably in these boats, and one Mahommedan servant should suffice for all your table requirements. No delay on account of servants should be permitted. No cook-boats should be taken when time is a great object. The cook-boat is always behind and a great source of delay; I soon found out their disadvantages and gave them up.

The following is the usual arrangement for providing fireplaces for cooking, and it is in invariable use amongst all sportsmen in camps as well as on boats. An ordinary wooden case, as sold with every dozen of claret, has its top and one long side removed; it is then filled with well-prepared clay. The cook digs out with his hands two holes for receipt of cinders and to allow draught, and above these holes a little common iron grating, worth about sixpence, is fixed. The fuel is charcoal, of which you must always, on all shikar expeditions, take a good supply. With this cooking arrangement any khitmutgar should be able to give you all you want on a boat, and with two or three

such boxes a regular cook will supply a handsome entertainment of soup, fish, joint, game, vegetables, and sweets for a party of four or five. If you are arranging for a long expedition, say for a fortnight's tiger-shooting, you must think of the charcoal, for it is bulky to carry. If in the country you are about to beat proper wood is abundant, the servants can make charcoal every four or five days. Generally you can either make or have it brought to your camp, but you cannot do without it.

Good water for drinking is an absolute necessity, inferior water induces dysentery and cholera. If there is tolerably good water near your encampment, or in the river on which your boat is, a good English filter may suffice. A makeshift may be made by putting three kulsees or ghurrahs, as these common earthern jars are called, one above the other, supported by three bamboos tied together; the two upper pots have small holes, and being filled with charcoal and sand, water is passed through and comes into the bottom jar fairly filtered. The water in many of the tidal rivers in Eastern Bengal is brackish, and can never be made fit for drinking purposes. In this case you must take a supply in large barrels and earthern jars, and fill them as opportunities offer when you pass places where wholesome water can be procured. The proper supply of wholesome water is a matter never to be lost sight of in arranging shikar parties.

To an old Indian it seems hardly necessary to tell even a tyro that a good supply of ordinary fowls must be taken in suitable bamboo cages on all occasions. Meat will not keep; but if you have a large party a small sheep or two can be taken alive and killed after a day or two. Venison, game, and wildfowl of course will be taken into account when calculating your mess supply.

If you are stationed near the railway you will be able to hunt and shoot at great distances from home. On a pinch I have slept and had my meals for two nights and more in a closed railway luggage-van; the little camp bed and camp table &c. can be easily arranged in such a van.

Military officers, if you are at a station where troops are located, generally have a command of tentage; they are accustomed to frequent long marches, and any sporting friends in the regiment might assist you greatly in forming your temporary encampments.

If you include hog-hunting in any shikar expedition for more than two days, it is very advisable to take a blacksmith or nalbund, and a proper supply of shoes and nails. I have suffered from the want of forethought in this particular. A bheesty, or water-carrier, is a most useful servant to take with you on an expedition. The larger your party the more the services of such a man are valued; but if you find any difficulty, and that the number of servants must be kept as small as possible, you can manage without a bheesty.

When using boats, or when the tents are pitched near a tank, there will be no difficulty in enjoying a swim, either in the early morning or after the day's sport is over.

Letter No. 27.

Preparation of skulls and skins.—Preservatives. Arsenic. Alum.—Carry a compass.—Locate Elephants sometimes at a distance from camp, and ride to and fro.—Rice may be used as food for horses occasionally.—Remarks on the cost of Shikar.—At first you must moderate expenditure. Usual social amusements must be given up.

Most sportsmen like to preserve the skulls of good hogs, the heads of fine horned deer, and the skins of tigers, leopards, &c., so I ought to tell you my experience in these particulars. Skulls are easiest cleaned by having all the flesh cut away first with a knife, and the brains cleared out as much as possible, and then by being sunk in cold water: after a time the remaining flesh decays and is easily got rid of, and the skull may then be blanched in the sun till all bad smells have disappeared. Care must be taken that jackals and beasts of the field and birds of the air do not make away with the bones.

The above plan answers well for deer's heads and horns, save that it often whitens the horns too much, but for hogs and carnivora it loosens all the front teeth and tusks. These may be fixed in by plaster of Paris and other fixing materials; but I never could obtain them, so for hogs' heads and tigers' heads I had all flesh scraped off, as much as possible, inside and out, except that of the gums. If the flesh of the gums can be got to dry on the bone, it will hold the teeth firmly, or nearly firm, long enough to enable you to get the heads to a professional taxidermist. I have several heads beside me now which have been dried this way. Some have been smoked over fires. None of these plans are wholly satisfactory; I can tell you of no better, and I suppose I dried and prepared a thousand heads. I have placed them in ant-hills and hung them in trees; but I know no way of easily and quickly preserving skulls and heads without a great deal of trouble so as to keep the bones white and the teeth firm in the jaws.

A tiger-skin is easily preserved if you cut off the head and the claws and treat them separately. To prepare a tiger's head for subsequent stuffing, so as to look really well in a glass case, you must turn over the skin and separate it entirely from all the bones except the jaws. Every particle of flesh must be removed, and the eyes and the brains extracted; this is a very tedious and troublesome job. All parts of the head and bones, inside and out, must be thoroughly and completely treated with strong arsenical soap, and the shape of the head re-formed as well as you can with tow, and bound round with thread. If this is done with tolerable success, the head can be sent to London, and Ward or any taxidermist will make a good job for you, asking in return, I found, a ten-pound note.

If you leave the head and paws on, they give twice as much trouble as the rest of the skin; but by cleaning them as much as possible, and continually

rubbing in arsenical soap, they can be secured from decay. A flat skin, without head or claws, can be easily cured, and afterwards surrounded and lined with cloth or bear's fur, and made into a carriage or other rug.

Furriers, and those who finally preserve skins, object to arsenical soap, because it makes the skin hard and gives them extra trouble. They recommend salt and alum; but I found that all the skins I treated with alum soon rotted in the damp climate of Eastern Bengal. I lost some beautiful skins. Any leather with alum in it will get damp and then rot in the rains, so I took to strong arsenical soap, which never failed me. It is easily made. Take half a pound of white arsenic, which can be procured all over Bengal, put it into a saucepan with a pound of common Bengalee soap and a little camphor, heat and well mix, and pour into a three-pound jam-pot. This should be rubbed or brushed well into the skin with tow or a stiff brush. One good dressing is sufficient for a skin, but the head and feet require several applications of the lather. The skin should be carefully pegged out in the sun at first and at every opportunity till quite dry; for this purpose it is convenient to prepare about a hundred little bamboo pegs or skewers before you start on a tiger-slaying expedition.

If you are an ornithologist, and desire to preserve bird-skins for a collection or to be put into cases, you will know the value of arsenical soap. I was extremely fond of ornithology and made collections for others. I took pains to secure birds for Jerdon and Hume, the great Indian ornithologists; but after I lost the joint of my thumb I was unable to skin birds. Sometimes I obtained the aid of a taught taxidermist. With trouble you can find out such men in Calcutta, or with the aid of the officers of the Asiatic Society's Museum, or you may have a young and promising Mahommedan taught to preserve birds and skins, and retain him as a general servant.

I have been told that it is a good plan to put skins into a barrel of liquid made of alum and salt and other preservative drugs, coop them up, and send them off to England. I dare say the plan would answer; but in Bengal barrels and coopers are not to be got, and the carriage of large barrels would add to the difficulties, which you will find quite sufficient when you have to send tents and provisions, servants and horses, howdahs and batteries for a fortnight's shikar to jungles in the interior, where there are no roads or navigable streams.

Hard-working Indian sportsmen who work all the ground they can get at, and go long distances on horseback to the places where their elephants are to begin to beat, have usually a good eye for country, and after going a journey once, are able to find their way over the same country again. Although such men can usually tell the points of the compass from the sun, yet I found it best to carry a pocket compass, and I always did so. In a fresh country I continually took bearings, and found the practice most useful. Very often, when at a long distance from camp, I have come upon game just before sun-

set, and when the day's sport ended found myself obliged to go home in the dark. Roads, guide-posts, or natives to speak to are not to be found. Any natives seeing or hearing of the approach of a body of men with elephants and horses would probably hide and keep silent. You must find your own way, and if the country is new to you and your mahouts, a compass is invaluable. Fogs, too, are exceedingly common in Eastern Bengal, and without a compass I do not know how you could manage ten miles of the homeward journey in a thick fog.

You ought to be able to work all the good country within a radius of eight or ten miles from your encampment; and to do this properly you must occasionally let the elephants, howdahs, &c. remain in some village close to the sporting-ground for the night. You should shoot up to this place, have your horses to meet you there, and ride back to camp. Early the next morning the elephants will get their food, and remain feeding till wanted. Your howdah-attendant, the mahouts, mates, &c. will remain at the village and get their early meal, and by the time you have had your own breakfast and ridden to the elephants all should be ready for the day's sport. You can then arrange either to shoot homewards and return on the elephants, or you can have your horses kept at any appointed place to take you back to camp. Arrangements of this sort save great loss of time, and enable you to beat much larger areas than when you start with the elephants from camp and have to be back again at the encampment before dark. To save time and trouble, if you kill a tiger, or even two, or any large deer that you want to send to camp, it is convenient to place the game on an elephant and send it to camp at once. In hot weather, if a tiger is not skinned within a few hours, all the hair may come off and the skin be useless.

If your stock of grain and oats gets short, and proper provender for the horses is unprocurable, you may, without fear, mix what you have with unhusked rice, and so double your store. Rice is always to be got, and horses are not averse to it. In anticipation of this contingency, I gave all my horses a little rice all the year round, and they were fond of it.

In my last letters I have been giving you the benefit of my experience for many years; but you must not think that I commenced my Eastern-Bengal shikar in the complete and finished style which I have referred to as that which ought to be followed if possible. There is one most important item to be considered, viz. expenditure. My income and pay at first were small, as are those of most young men who go to Bengal to make, not to spend, money. You must cut your coat according to your cloth. In no country is good sport to be got without great outlay. Fox-hunting, pheasant-shooting, partridge-shooting, a grouse-moor, deer-stalking—all these are the right only of the rich. Still, as a youth, or connected with wealthier friends, you may have been invited to participate occasionally in all these sports without much outlay. So in Eastern Bengal you cannot keep elephants and pig-stickers, or

go for a month's tiger-shooting to the Brahmapootra churs, without drawing heavily from your bank. With the exception of snipe-shooting, which costs a mere nothing, and wildfowl-shooting when it is to be got near, and a little shooting at game birds and hares with beaters, you can work none of the great sports without a large expenditure. Yet a friend may offer you a few days' shooting, with the chance of a shot at a tiger, and lend you an elephant and a howdah, giving you your meals and a share in a tent, merely asking you to bring your own camp-bed and battery. Possibly you may have even horses lent you for pig-sticking. After I got my name up I had numerous offers of horses—sometimes three for one meet; and in early days I had a deal of excellent sport on other men's horses, with my own spurs and spear.

You must begin in accordance with your income. Suppose your income and salary to be Rs. 500 per mensem. You would have a good riding-horse and your own guns; with these perhaps you would see a little hog-hunting and the best of snipe-shooting. As you get promoted to Rs. 700 per mensem you may increase your stable. Before this, if you take my advice, you will have procured your howdah and prepared your guddy, so as to be able to make use of an elephant or two borrowed occasionally. When your pay reaches Rs. 1000 you may begin to form your elephant stud, and so on. Most of the keen shikarries of Bengal, who studied and pursued sport with zest and vigour, and continued to do so for years, were bachelors. A married man with a rising family could not be allowed to spend his Christmas and other gay seasons away from his wife and his friends, in the hills and lonely jungles far away. Family ties are a great check to the pursuit of Indian sport for a continuance; and unless you contemplate a persevering prosecution of sport, almost as a business to be steadily followed year after year, you cannot expect to attain to the position of a real Bengal sahib, and very much of my lessons will remain unstudied. Perhaps others may profit by them, as a whole or in part.

Letter No. 28.—*TIGERS.*

The first Tiger I saw.—Obhyah country. The Burrin.—How I failed at my first attempt.—If possible do not disturb a Tiger late in the day.—The Judge introduces me to my first Tiger, and instructs me.—Kite flies away with a Tiger.—Backergunge.—The Soonderbunds. Difficulties connected with Sport there.

I killed my first boar within two weeks of my arrival in Bengal; but it was more than two years before I saw a real Bengal tiger in his native jungle, and then I did not bag him.

A Haileybury friend was marching to his appointment from Rajshahye and shooting as he went. The judge of Rajshahye lent me a howdah and two elephants, and I went with my friend for two days. There is a charming place in the Rajshahye district called Obhyah. Once indigo was made there, but the factory, bungalow, and vats are deserted, and I suppose by this time have disappeared; the bungalow was situated on a high bank of red soil over the clear river, the Maldah Mahanuddy, which separated Rajshahye from the Maldah and Purneah districts. A nicer place for a sportman than Obhyah I never met in my Indian experience; all sorts of game abounded. In 1850 Nawabs of Morshedabad had not ruined the place, as I heard they afterwards did by their yearly excursions. There was a valley with water in the centre extending for many miles; deep nullahs, fringed with tall, strong grass near the streams, and lighter thatching-grass on the borders, among which were patches of rosebush-jungle, ran at right angles to the water from plains of cultivated land on both sides of the valley. Beyond the cultivation was the Burrin; this consisted of dry and almost useless soil, so high above the valley that the people sometimes called it the Burrin Hills. Here were large tracts of tree-jungle, with palms, bamboos, and all the common Bengal trees; at the foot of these trees shrubby, thorny jungle afforded the best of cover for all game. The Burrin was so unlimited, so hard to beat, so difficult to shoot in, and considered so unsatisfactory, that sportsmen seldom looked it up; nevertheless it was here that most of the game found breeding-shelter, and from the Burrin the deer and the hogs descended to the valleys to find shelter in the grass and rose-bushes and to revel in the green crops, and when hard pressed by beating-elephants, all the game would make for the Burrin. Here, between the water and the Burrin, was ample space to ride hog and deer; tigers and leopards followed the deer and hog to the valley; black partridges and hog-deer swarmed in the thatching-grass; khyah partridges, called here "chickore," abounded in the rose-bushes; snipe and nearly every kind of Bengal wild duck resorted to the water in the centre. The only game which stuck steadily to the Burrin, as far as I could ascertain, consisted of spotted deer, which I never shot elsewhere in Bengal proper, and peafowl. It was in this delightful hunting-place that I saw a tiger for the first time.

The faded ink of the diary briefly records:—"1850, Jan. 24th, Obhyah. Four deer, nine brace of partridges, two couple of snipe, two wild ducks; wounded a tiger." But I remember every incident of the day well. The sport was, as we thought, over. We were returning to the deserted factory, where my friend was to rest for the night; I was to return to office at head-quarters in a palkee. The water from the factory-vats used to be carried off by a deeply-cut nullah, which had long been neglected, and was now filled with tall grass. Just for a possible shot, or a jackal to discharge our bullets at, we beat up the nullah, and close to the vats I saw a head and ears with two white spots; and before I knew what it was, out bounded a lovely tiger. My

mahout promptly took his elephant down to the bottom of the nullah, instead of going up the bank; thus I lost time. When I did reach the upper regions the tiger had gone some way into the thatching-grass; I got a long shot and wounded him. Of course we did our best, and beat up the grass as well as we could; we found blood; and here and there a trail, but darkness came on in half an hour, and we had to stop. My friend beat the whole place next morning, but never found the tiger.

Thus early in my tiger-shooting lessons I might have been taught two things—one, always remain atop of a nullah, never go down towards its centre if you want a shot; another, if possible do not disturb a tiger just before dark; of course sometimes it cannot be avoided, but if circumstances will admit of it leave the jungle undisturbed and visit it as early as possible next morning.

If there is a kill the chances are the tiger will visit it, and when gorged go to drink and then to rest in the nearest favourable cover. You may find out if he has eaten more of the dead bullock; you may track his footsteps. At any rate you will have light to beat every place thoroughly and time to follow the tiger if you should start him. I was young and inexperienced at that time; my companion had then shot neither deer nor tiger. I suppose we both speedily picked up more art as we went on with our shikar.

A tiger disturbed after sunset and fired at will probably leave the jungle in which he was found and travel far away during the night; no one will see him as he goes. But a tiger who has fed well during the night and chosen the place for his shelter during the glare of the following day, will be slumbering and still till roused up by the elephants, and then he will cling to the jungle in preference to facing open plains, where he would most likely be viewed. I always found tigers much more lively after sunset and much more wary and difficult of approach.

On my return to the station I received a good deal of tiger-shooting advice from the judge, who was preparing for his annual shikar expedition. He promised to get me a chance again at a tiger; and exactly a month after I killed my first tiger. I obtained a week's leave from the collector: I had only just joined as an assistant and knew little of Bengalee or law. The collector politely said, "Go, by all means; you are little use to me. I have to supervise all your work, and may as well do it from the first." And so I went.

I shot with the judge for five days and had excellent sport; but only on one of these days did we kill a tiger. Word was brought of a kill near a nullah well known to the judge and his friend, a planter who had joined us with some of his own elephants. There was no mistake as to the truth of the information; we found plenty of traces, but for a long time we failed to find the animal. It seemed to me that I never saw so much game or had such beautiful chances; but the judge's orders were imperative—"Fire at

nothing, not even a leopard, till you see the tiger, and keep as silent as you can." At last about forty yards in front a tiger came to the edge of the grass on my side; she stumbled and rolled about with a blundering curious action: I was much excited, but managed to hit her on the fore leg. She gave a roar and retreated into the thickest of the grass. The report of the shot at once brought up the judge and the planter; they had killed tigers at this spot before. The judge laid out the beat and gave us our places, and we moved on: presently the grass was seen to be waving, and the tiger broke across an open spot, and we all peppered her well, and there she lay biting her own fore leg most viciously. As soon as she was quite dead we got off the elephants, measured her, and I was shown the proper way to pad a tiger.

When we reached camp and skinned the tigress, four young cubs were found inside of her. A flock of vultures and no end of kites had attended our camp, feeding on the carcases and entrails of the game we killed. A boy got hold of one of these half-formed cubs; it was about the size of a rat: he was taking it home, when a kite made a swoop and took it clean out of his hand and flew off with it—a case of a kite carrying off a tiger.

There were tigers at every station to which I was ever appointed. I killed tigers at all except Backergunge and Chittagong. At Backergunge there are perhaps more tigers than in any other district; but they are to be found mostly in the unhealthy Soonderbund in the south of the district. There were no elephants available during the few months I was at Backergunge; there were no roads at all then, if even now any exist. It was a bad place for horses; one had to go everywhere in a boat. Every bazaar and village was situated on a stream. I only made one expedition to the south, and that was for rhinoceros. But gentlemen who had taken leases of Soonderbund land and had to clear away forest and cultivate rice, and lived in this insalubrious country, used to kill no end of tigers yearly almost in self-defence; and a cousin of mine got some sport in the district. It was a place I hated, though I had often to visit it. I killed buffaloes and wildfowl and rhinoceros; and the island of Duckin Shabazpore, which was almost as near Backergunge as to Noakholly, and where I had magnificent sport, was within a fourteen hours' row in a boat. However, I look on Backergunge as the worst station to which I was sent.

There are tigers in Chittagong, and others have killed them; but, as a rule, they live in the hills which are covered with dense jungles. The regular pursuit of them does not pay. I was not very long at Chittagong: the best sport there is jungle-fowl and snipe-shooting. Noakholly too can be worked for hog-hunting.

I was never stationed at Moorshedabad, Nuddeah, or Furreedpore; but I have shot and ridden hogs in these zillahs. I believe no tiger-shooting is to be got now in any of them. The districts to the west of the Hoogly river do

not come under the definition of Eastern Bengal. Perhaps tigers are more numerous in the Soonderbunds than in any other part of India; these stretch from the mouth of the Hoogly eastward to the mouth of the Megna, all along the northern shores of the Bay of Bengal: they are almost devoid of population; high tides flow over them. They are covered with peculiar jungles and trees that flourish in muddy soil tainted with salt; these jungles are full of tigers and spotted deer; crocodiles are to be seen on the banks of every stream; rhinoceros, swamp-deer, and jungle-fowl inhabit certain parts. But generally the country is so unhealthy and has so bad a reputation that Europeans do not work it for sport. One unfortunate friend of mine attempted to shoot tigers at Saugor Island. He touched a tiger-trap, the gun went off, the bullets passed through both thighs; he was taken as fast as a boat could carry him to the Calcutta Hospital, and died, I think, before he reached it. Strange to say, this gentleman was nearly killed when riding a buffalo; he escaped that time with the loss of his horse. But another mutual friend of ours, a man of very great sporting knowledge and experience, on an evil day had the folly to try and shoot a buffalo on foot in muddy ground, and paid the forfeit of his life. This, too, occurred not far from the Soonderbunds. The judge of Backergunge, who afterwards was the commissioner, whose ill-luck I have mentioned under the head of hog-hunting earlier in these letters, went shooting in the Soonderbunds immediately after I left his district. He disregarded rules which I had often discussed with him, and let his men straggle about instead of keeping them together; his best man was killed by a wounded tiger; and he declined to go tiger-shorting alone any more in the Backergunge Soonderbunds. Tiger-shooting on foot in these jungles requires judgment and care, and, considering the deadly nature of the fevers almost always contracted in this pestiferous salt mangrove-swamp, I think the tigers of the Soonderbunds had better be left in peace.

Letter No. 29.

Size of Tigers: seldom exceed 11 feet.—Anecdote of firing into a Tiger with small shot.—Number of Tigers killed by one man.—A youngster or a stranger requires to be taught the science of Tiger-shooting.—Tiger-shooting in Duckin Shabazpore. I prepare boats and transport Elephants to the island in the Megna.—Balám boats.—Send Elephants across.—Employ Shikarry in getting true information.

I have no need to tell you much about the natural history of the tiger; specimens are to be seen in every menagerie. But as to his size you will

have very different accounts. There was an article on this subject, written by my friend Sir Joseph Fayrer, in 'Nature' for November 1878. The statements of many experienced sportsmen were recorded, my own among the number. I say there that no tiger killed by me measured more than 11 feet from snout to tail when properly measured *. I have shot with several of the gentlemen whose notes were recorded by Sir Joseph. A curious thing happened when I was shooting with Mr. C. Shillingford, which I will relate presently. Had that tiger been measured before he was skinned in my presence, I might have been able to say I had shot a tiger between 11 and 12 feet long; but though I wounded the animal when alive, I was not present when he was killed. I merely, to my chagrin, was repeatedly shown the skin afterwards. I may remark that the most experienced tiger-shooter in my own service stated that he did not think he had once killed one more than 11 feet and a few inches long; and I know he killed between four and five hundred tigers. The conclusion Sir Joseph comes to, after careful comparison of accounts, is that any thing over 10 feet is very large, but that tigers may exceed 10 feet 3 inches, and that, in a few rare and exceptional instances, 11 and even 12 feet have been recorded.

Tigers vary greatly in size and weight; those of the Tippera, Sylhet, and Chittagong hills are smaller in every way, as far as my experience went, than those which inhabited the churs and riverain lands in the same part of Bengal. I cannot exactly say why the animals in the north-east of Noakholly were so decidedly smaller than those of the churs, nor why the Soonderbund tigers killed by shikarries and brought to Backergunge for the Government reward were smaller than those killed in the islands of the Megna. It was a curious fact too that the reverse was the case with hogs; the chur hogs of Noakholly were smaller than the inland hogs. I have seen very large old hogs near the hills of Tippera and Sylhet. Tigers vary greatly in their tails. Some sportsmen are very clever in stretching skins when being dried to a marvellous size. One takes great care as regards the first few tigers one kills; but after you get accustomed to it you only measure the very largest. My diary gives no measurements scarcely in my later years in Bengal.

Now for the curious episode with Mr. C. Shillingford. It happened in August 1862, and in the course of one of the many unsuccessful and unsatisfactory expeditions after tigers, which I do not refer to much, for if I were to tell of my bad days as lengthily as I write of some of the best, old age would carry me off before I could end. However, I joined a party in the south of the Purneah district to shoot up some ground on which tigers were supposed to be numerous, and which could only be got at that time of the

* Different men measure differently, and measurement with a rigid rule differs from that with a flexible tape.

year, when the Gangetic inundation had swamped all the low ground and driven all game to the few hillocks and places not under water. The party consisted of Mr. C. Shillingford, two artillery officers, and myself. The weather was hot and abominable, muggy, and at times wet. The boundless plains of lower Purneah were covered with grass which varied from 4 to 12 feet in height. To my mind the country was in the worst possible condition for sport; but no doubt sport is to be got at such times, and has been got, only we were unlucky, and I was especially so. We were out for several days, and were continually deluded by tales of tigers here and tigers there. We shot at no inferior game when there was any chance of tiger. On the whole trip our bag was only a few buffaloes, partridges, and peafowl. One day, the last that I could stay but one, we put up a lot of partridges and a peacock, and marked them, and it was decided to go at them for want of nobler game. So the two officers went towards the partridges, and Shillingford and I went after the peacock; it had flown into a very thick tree, at the base of which was some scrubby jungle. We were dodging round the tree, trying to get first chance at the bird; Shillingford saw it and dropped it almost on to a fine tiger, which bolted out about twelve paces from my elephant. In my haste I let fly with No. 5 shot; I then changed, and took up a ball-gun and hit the tiger hard, but he was into grass twelve feet high in a minute. We all gathered together and beat that overgrown grass-jungle artistically and patiently, with no result. Next day was my last; I could spare no more time, and left. A few days after, the other three sportsmen came on this tiger; he was wounded, sick, and savage, and fought the elephants and gave great sport. When killed, it was found that my ball had wounded him badly, and the sore was in an inflamed and stinking condition, which accounted for the tiger's angry behaviour. On skinning him the whole charge of No. 5 shot was found in his skin, and I believe it is there now. Whenever I visited these hospitable planters, I was shown the skin and chaffed about it. As shown to me, the skin was nearly twelve feet long, and they all declared that the animal was much over eleven feet when unskinned; but I was quite close to him when alive, and he seemed no bigger than many I had killed, and as he had not been measured, I declined to believe that he was eleven feet long.

The Purneah tigers are certainly large and fierce, those of the Purneah Terai especially. In that neighbourhood lived Mr. George Palmer, and this gentleman was said to have killed many more tigers than any man in India; he lived in a tiger country, was a fine shot, and had many excellent elephants. I was told that he had killed above a thousand tigers before I met him: how many he killed in his lifetime I never heard; but he had for more than thirty years, I believe, worked up the Purneah and Rungpore jungles at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains, and knew all the Brahmapootra churs well. He was a large landholder as well as an indigo-planter.

If you can make friends with some such gentleman as this, and arrange to have some sport with him, you would enjoy it, and find what a little you knew and how much you had to learn. Occasionally rich men, even from England, obtain introductions to sportsmen who live in the right place, and induce them to arrange a shooting-party at the expense of the stranger; in fact, no stranger nor youngster unacquainted with the country can expect to get good tiger-shooting off-hand, except with the aid of capable and experienced persons, who know where tigers are to be found and how to organize a campaign against them; and it is only fair that the rich stranger should pay for the costly enjoyment he seeks to obtain.

The first regular expedition I made for tiger-shooting, and nothing else, entirely on my own responsibility and cost, came off in The Doorga-Poojah holidays in 1854, in Pergunnah Duckin Shabazpore, a large island in the Megna, forming part of the district of Noakholly.

I began arrangements for this expedition about two months before actual sport could begin; the rains were in full pour the whole time, and the rivers and streams at their deepest. I had one good howdah-elephant and two small baggage-animals of my own; in the course of time I borrowed seven more, most of them good-sized useful elephants. I knew I could get sufficient elephants; but the question was, how was I to get them to Duckin Shabazpore, an island in the Megna, separated from the mainland of Noakholly by a deep rapid tidal stream, averaging a width of between four and five miles. At the best I could only get a boat across once a day, and only in favourable weather; steady rain without wind was what I wished for for crossing, and fine days, of course, for shooting.

I hired a large balām boat from Chittagong for two months; the elephants were to be taken across and brought back in this vessel. These very peculiar boats are made in Arracan, and employed greatly in the corn, rice, betel-nut, jute, tobacco, dried fish and flesh, native cloth, and all manner of trades from Naraingunge southward all along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal: they are made of planks without rivets of any kind; the boards are placed together and sewn strongly with native cane, and the seams are caulked with hemp and prepared juice of the gāb tree. The boat as a whole is flexible and will stand much knocking about: the large ones carry many thousand maunds of cargo; they are rowed by twelve to twenty rowers, and have mat sails.

The next thing was to prepare places for embarking and disembarking, and to make the boat fit for the huge heavy animals; this had to be done at a distance, under the superintendence of the best natives I could get. The bottom of the boat was filled for three feet with beaten soil and the trunks of plantain or banana trees. I rode over to see the first elephant put on board. The boat was heeled over and the elephant, one of the best behaved, was walked into it; she did it quietly; the boat was then righted and the

elephant firmly secured, and then at the first favourable tide the boat was taken across, accompanied by two magisterial guard-boats: in less than two hours the animal was landed in the island of Duckin Shabazpore. It took nearly a fortnight to take all the elephants across; during this time Budderuddeen and his cousin Ali were scouting up the whole island, and making, I afterwards heard, a nice little sum by showing the elephants to the men, women, and children of that inaccessible country.

I knew tigers abounded in the island; the reports from the shikarry were excellent; and I knew to a certainty of nine tigers in good country, where they might be killed with ordinary luck. The south-west of the island was adjacent to the Soonderbunds; the country here was impracticable for elephants, though probably all the tigers in the island come from this quarter. I commenced from as near this corner of the island as I could, having to sail round the northern extremity first, and I reached the elephants on the 23rd of September.

I lived comfortably in my large coss-boat, which, as magistrate of Noakholly, I was bound to keep. The weather was execrable, and half the time the rains came down in a deluge, and sport was impossible; but on the fine days it exceeded my expectations. The time for arrangements having been longer than I expected, the holidays on the criminal or magisterial side came to an end; the civil and revenue courts were shut for a longer period. I had therefore to conduct a certain amount of official work, and to be in office for about six hours a day for three days in the week.

LETTER No. 30.

The country to be beaten up.—Sport with Tigers.—Bad weather.—Several Tigers.—A very hard day. Wasps. Difficulties. Fighting Tiger. Fighting Tigress: attacks the Elephant. Another Tiger. Obliged to turn homewards. Remarks on this day's sport. —Man-killer.—Try to kill a brace of Tigers right and left. Fail, and then kill the two. A third large and savage Tiger. Brilliant charge.

I COMMENCED on the 24th September. A cow had been killed during the night close to my boat; I came on tracks, but found that jungle quite impracticable: it consisted of unlimited null-grass as high as the elephants. This grass affords splendid cover for game, and is resorted to by all animals except, perhaps, bears; it is good food for elephants when succulent: when in patches, there is good shooting to be got; but when unlimited in extent, as it was here in September, it would have been waste of time to try to beat in it. So I arranged to shoot to Sumblepoorah, and ordered the whole

of the boats to move to that village. I had some hard beating on the way to this place; but I put up a very large and handsome male tiger, who was wounded at the first shot, and then charged well when I next came near him; he was not more than nine feet six inches long and had a short tail, but he was exceedingly stout and heavy, and stood four feet at the shoulder—I think the highest tiger I ever killed; he had a splendid hairy head; his arm was exactly two feet in circumference. The natives said two other tigers went off while I was engaged with this one; I had no time for more, the whole day had been spent as detailed.

The next day it rained in desperate torrents. On the 26th I was on my elephant by 5.30 A.M.; the boats were ordered to Toobkee, and the marnjees were directed to keep a look-out for the elephants and shots. The boats sailed up the beautiful river Betwah, on the banks of which I intended to have a long steady beat; and an arduous day it was, under a fierce sun, in a very damp atmosphere.

At that early hour no information could be expected. I commenced to beat where I had left off last time; the jungle was good, and there were traces of tigers, and nothing more. Then I beat up some hoogla-jungle and saw plenty of footmarks: next I tried some heavy jungle to the northward, which was far more difficult to beat; the trees and thorns were very thick, and in nearly every likely place was a wasps' nest. I all but abandoned the place, when a tiger started; I gave him two balls, and he fell under a wasps' nest: before I could manage to give him a mortal wound, he got into still thicker tree-jungle, and in beating this, I put up a much larger tiger and wounded him. We were working away as hard as we could, difficult beating, no end of bother with the wasps, when one of the wounded tigers sneaked out, and went across the tall rice-crop to a small patch of jungle, and the natives shouted and marked him exactly. I got the elephants together and made a close line. This patch gave no difficulty, but the tiger at once charged: I knocked him over with a ball in the throat, and I thought he was killed; he, however, got up again and got into some thick grass, and there we found him, dead. This was a male, but the smaller of the two.

Budderuddeen, who had been scouting all the morning, now came up and said he had marked a tiger into the hoogla-jungle, which I had beaten early in the morning; it had gone there while I was shooting at the others. It was now near midday, so I gave half an hour's rest: the mahouts got what refreshment they could from a little village—parched rice, sweetmeats, and milk; I sat under a tree, and the elephants found plenty of bamboo-leaves. Then we went to the hoogla; but before entering it I heard that the tiger had gone right through to some jungle on the river bank: went after him at best pace. The jungle now was partly tree and shrub and partly kewah or screw-pine, and we came on two dead cows, freshly killed, and very soon after turned up a tigress, which growled and roared: I hit her and stopped her;

she got under some thick thorny kewah, and it was not easy to get a shot, and the elephants were rather frightened by her roars. Suddenly she charged right out and attacked an elephant called "Brindabund," and they had a grand fight: the elephant kicked the tigress about, each kick would have killed a man in an instant; but the tigress was tough and fierce, and wounded "Brindabund" on the trunk and on each leg, and blood was pouring freely. At last they separated, and I was able to put in a ball behind the ear. This was a long low tigress; not far off we found what I suppose was her son. He was not quite full-grown, but made a deal of noise like his mother, but showed no actual fight, and was killed in three shots. Budderuddeen declared that neither of these two tigers was the one he marked into the hoogla; however, I had now got a long way from the hoogla and the jungle in which I had left the wounded tiger in the morning. It was nearly 4 P.M., I had a long way to go to reach the boats, and three tigers were padded; I decided to beat towards the boats.

Nothing could have been better than the day's sport: had I been accompanied by two more experienced hunters, with elephants, I might possibly have, twice in my life, been at the death of five tigers in a day; but I had all the beating to do, and it was most difficult. The jungle in September is at its densest and worst condition, the trees and thorns rendered it imperative that I should keep the elephants in line by being in their midst, and so, of course, I could not take very many chances that offered themselves on each side; and, above all, each tiger seemed at once to take a line among the wasps' nests. These wasps are not so bad as bees, in that they do not leave the bush in which the nest is for more than a radius of about thirty yards, whereas bees will follow hunters for miles; but still they almost prevent beating. Afterwards, in subsequent expeditions at this season, I always carried a kind of firework made of gunpowder and saltpetre and stuff, enclosed in a lump of hardened dry clay; this could be thrown into the bush, and after a moment it would fizz and roar and smoke, and sometimes it made a tiger bolt; but it frightened the elephants, and did nearly as much harm as good.

Rain in unceasing torrents and official work took up my time till the 29th of September, when my boats were at Khola. I had killed a tigress since those mentioned on the 26th, who was said to have carried off a man: I could not get sufficient corroboration to make me believe the story; very commonly any man who is missing in these parts is reported as having been carried off by a tiger. On the 29th, however, when I was engaged in police business, a man rather obstreperously forced his way to my table and threw down on my papers the leg and foot of a boy, saying—"What is the use of a Hakim like you? There is the leg of my only son; why not kill the tiger that ate him?" The rain had ceased. I knew there were several tigers, so I at once ordered the elephants and set out for a long afternoon. I was taken to a nice kind of jungle, and in less than five minutes away went a tiger. I had a couple of

long shots and believe I missed. We now had to beat the sides of a large tank; I took up a good position, kept one elephant beside me to prevent my howdah-elephant from being unsteady, and let the other elephants beat towards me. Presently not one but two beautiful tigers broke across an open space. I tried hard to perform a feat I had long wished for an opportunity to try, viz. to kill two tigers dead right and left; but the first did not fall to the shot, so I had to put the second ball into him. That, too, did not kill outright. Tigers on such occasions go a great pace, and both my balls were slightly behind the spot I meant to hit. The second tiger was unfired at; I went after the wounded one, got another shot as he was going quick through the jungle, and then when next I got to him he was dead. How the second tiger got back into the spot where I first found him I never could tell, for there were several hundreds of villagers watching from all parts—tops of trees, tops of houses, and from every available point of view. However she got up again exactly where she did at first. I hit her somewhere about the head, I think, because her behaviour after the shot was rather insane: she took through the thick jungle where she had shelter, and loitered in the thin where she was exposed, and then she went out into the growing rice, and there I got an easy shot and killed her. This was a nice pair of beautifully marked tigers; but the man who had lost his son said that the real animal was larger and of a darker colour than these two. The scouts now came with reports of a kill only two hours before. They said the tiger was in hoogla-jungle; this jungle (*Typha elephantina* is its botanical name, I believe) is always easily beaten, so, though the sun was already near the horizon and the jungle fully three miles off, and my rule is not to disturb a tiger late in the day, I resolved to go at him. We pounded along as quick as possible, leaving a chuprassy to superintend the skinning of the pair of tigers, and got to the jungle just as the sun set. There had been no kill, but a tremendous tiger was stated to have tried to kill one of a large herd of buffaloes which had beaten him off. The Gowala, or cowherd, declared he had heard the tiger roar not ten minutes before we came. The elephants were put in line; I took the centre; the beating was quite easy. Presently Budderuddeen, who was in the howdah behind me, said "I smell him!" and then I saw a very large dark tiger standing about eighty yards off lashing his tail; almost instantly he gave a roar and came down on us in splendid style. My elephant was quite steady: I hit him well forward and he rolled over twice like a rabbit, but was up in a moment and went direct at a small beater elephant to my left, which bolted with a shriek of terror; this gave me an easy shot at about twenty yards, and I killed him stone dead with a bullet in the neck.

This was a really large tiger, about ten feet four or five inches long, very dark in the skin, old and covered with scars, and with one canine tooth broken out; probably this was the man-killer. His skin when stretched and dried was twelve feet long, and eight feet and three inches broad; he was,

however, not nearly so tall at the shoulder as the tiger killed earlier in this expedition.

I got no more luck till I came to the last day's beat before I should return to the mainland. Here I got one tiger, and then my first trip to the islands of the Megna for tiger-shooting ended. The exigencies of office and the greater charm of pig-sticking at Siddhee and on the mainland, and occasional trips for junglefowl-shooting with Tippera friends at the foot of the hills, with accidental days at a tiger now and then when visiting police stations, took up the remainder of the seasons.

Letter No. 31.

Another trip to the islands.—A roaring Tiger.—Buffaloes.—Sport flags.—Beat a likely jungle, which a native Shikarry had disturbed.—Find that a Tiger had been shot by a poisoned arrow, and eaten by wife and daughter.—Kill these two Tigers.—Tigers feed on each other, and every other thing, even grasshoppers.—I try a dish of locusts.—Long hunt after Tigers. Find at last.—Budderuddeen hunts up the trail. Place scouts on trees, and eventually bag this shirking Tigress.—Arrangements for shooting while engaged on duty in the interior of districts.—Grand fight with a Man-killer.

At the next Doorga-Poojah holidays in 1855 I visited Duckin Shabazpore again on a tiger-killing expedition. This time I prevailed on the doctor of the station to come with me for a few days. We were later and reached the rendezvous on the 14th October and got on the elephants about 1 P.M. at Mungul Shigdars Hath. We heard of a fresh kill and turned up two tigers, both females. The doctor had only just come from England and knew nothing about sport, but he managed to knock over the smaller tigress well: the larger showed fight, but was stopped at once and killed; she was 8 feet 8 inches long and stood 3 feet 3 inches at the shoulder.

Next day we beat a deal of grassy jungle to the south-west. I believe we moved game, but the grass was high and we could see nothing; so we passed over a stream into Chur Lord Harding. There was a deal of mangrove-jungle here; the trees were thick and strong; tigers were said to live here, but we saw none, and the under part of the jungle was open. Beyond the mangrove was a nice patch of hoogla; here there was a roaring tiger. He made all the elephants bolt and we had great trouble in killing him; he was 9 feet 5 inches long and stood 3 feet 6 inches.

On the 16th we had a long day's beating over Sumblepoorah and Dolye-gonugger, but put up no tigers; we saw some hog-deer, which are scarce in Duckin Shabazpore, and came on a herd of buffaloes; we bagged two females, but could not get at the large male. At night we moved the boats to Kuchooah.

On the 17th we tried most promising jungles; killed a female tiger 8 feet 5 inches long. There were many traces, but we found nothing: this was remarkable as the ground was first rate; I killed tigers here in two subsequent years. At this season, however, very many tigers remain unfound in the extensive jungles and there is a great deal in luck. On the 18th we came across the same herd of buffaloes again, but never got up to them.

On the 19th we came to the beat which Budderuddeen had long told us was the most certain. He knew of a family of three tigers and had seen them together more than once. The jungle, which was light, bordered the Gungapore Khall or stream. Everywhere there were traces of tigers—foot-marks, old kills, and sleeping-places; but a native shikarry, we heard, had been after them for a week, and an old hypocritical Fakeer professed to have spirited them away with incantations; anyhow we did not come on them at first. About three miles off was a large jungle, and it seemed as if the tigers had shifted their quarters to this place. We followed the tracks in this direction, and just as we entered this thick and difficult jungle we came on what seemed a fresh kill. To my astonishment, I saw the hind quarter of a tiger half eaten; I got off the elephant and examined, and we found all the arrangements of the shikarry, and his bow which had discharged a poisoned arrow. A boy in a tree said the shikarry had set the trap the night before; this was discouraging. We began to beat the thorny jungle to the best of our power, and presently there was a growl and a charge, and evidently we had disturbed more than one tiger.

The jungle was as high as our heads; there was a deal of thick, strong, thorny bush-jungle and bright green grass with waving feathery tops, a grass not unlike pampas grass. By degrees, and by keeping the elephants very close together, we beat this down, and at the sixth beat we caught sight of one tiger and wounded her, and at the next beat managed to kill her, and while doing so another got into a corner. We got fair shots at her, when we forced her out and so we bagged the two. The first tiger measured 8 feet 11 inches, which is large for a tigress, and the second was a little under 8 feet long.

We took the bodies home, and on skinning them and opening their stomachs I took nearly the whole skin of a tiger from their insides. It was now clear that the native shikarry had shot the large male of the family of three tigers, and that the two females had eaten the male when killed. Tigers are omnivorous. From habit and preference they prefer to feed on deer, hogs, and cattle killed by themselves, but they will eat any dead animal they come across. I have just shown that they eat the dead bodies of their companions; I have proved that in the inundations they catch fish, turtles, crocodiles, and large lizards. I believe they will occasionally eat sugar-cane and maize; but the most curious thing I ever knew them eat was grasshoppers. I once killed a tiger whose paunch was crammed full of

grasshoppers or locusts; nearly all birds, and fish, and deer, and cats eat grasshoppers, but it was new to me that a tiger should catch and eat several pounds of these insects at once.

I tried locusts, on one occasion, myself. The air was nearly black with them; I fired two charges of snipe-shot, and picked up enough for a dish. The cook prepared these with a kind of curry-sauce. They were not at all bad, and reminded me of shrimps; the shelly skins were rather troublesome; but John the Baptist was not so badly off if he had plenty of locusts and wild honey.

I never saw the shikarry, but we appropriated his bow; it was short and extremely strong, and was tied to a tree and fired off by means of a string stretched at about six inches from the ground. The tiger's body we thought must have been within four feet from the point of the arrow when the bow went off. I believe the poison consists chiefly of the venom of the cobra; this is easily extracted, as I shall detail when I come to the letter on snakes.

I shall only notice one other day in this trip to the islands of the Megna. On the 19th of October I visited a jungle where tigers were said to have lived for many months. The place had been a homestead or small village, but had long been deserted; it was overgrown with all kinds of jungle; the old fruit-trees and tall palms grew on the borders of a tank, now filled up with the dense foliage of those plants that only grow in mud which remains wet all the year round. The old owners had taken up their abode in the midst of a fertile plain, and the luxuriant rice-crop which surrounded the whole jungle was above three feet high. We spent many hours beating the thorny shrubby matted underwood, for evidently it was a tigers' home, but they had departed. News was brought of a kill at a distance, and we went there and found that a valuable cow had been killed while I was beating the homestead. There was little or no jungle, and, indeed, little dry land. There was any amount of water and reedy island-like spots surrounded by rice-crop; the elephants were continually sinking up to their middles. But we found two tigers and both started in different directions; they were difficult to follow on account of the deep mud; but we killed the smaller, and when this one was padded I set Budderuddeen to follow the trail of the other. He hunted it well and quickly; each footmark in the mud was plain, but the deep water puzzled us: at times we traced where the tiger had swam across by the tracks among the lotus-leaves and flowers, and then the footmarks on the other side were hit off, and so gradually we marked the tigress back to the very jungle so carefully beaten in the morning. This was now much trampled down. I put about a dozen boys up in palm trees to mark. The tigress evidently knew that her home had been disturbed and all her shelter beaten nearly flat. As soon as we entered at one end of the jungle with the elephants she sneaked out at the other into the tall rice, but the shouts of

the boys in the trees frightened her back each time she left; she gave a deal of trouble and we never could get actually at her, so at last we divided forces. The doctor took one half the elephants and started from one side of the jungle, and I came towards him with the remaining elephants from the other; these tactics were effective, and she came running from the doctor towards me. I hit her and she bolted back, and the doctor met her and so we finished her off. On occasions like these, scouts in trees are invaluable; but, as a rule, the lair of the tiger is in less populous places and boys as scouts are not procurable.

I visited these islands twice more at the same season of the year, and had fair sport each time; but there were many days when I was unsuccessful. Tigers, no doubt, abound more at this season than at any other. The wonderful growth of vegetation and the large extent of tall rice-crop now getting ripe enable the animals to wander great distances unobserved; as the harvest carries away the crop, and dry weather, assisted by jungle fires, opens out the country, most of these tigers retreat to their strongholds in the Soonderbunds to the westward. In the spring they seem almost to have left the island of Duckin Shabazpore. I killed some every year on the mainland when on duty in tents in the interior; I shot almost every day or went out hog-hunting when thus visiting the police stations. I found the following distribution of duty and work answer well:—Six hours for office duty; these might be from six to noon, or from noon till dark, according to arrangement. My clerks and writers would come at daybreak, and all the public who had business at my tents would appear soon after; by noon the necessary business would be finished, and the office would then be closed for the day. From noon till dark I either shot on elephants, it might be at deer, jungle-fowl, and most likely at leopards, or I could beat up likely tiger ground or go after hogs with the spear. At times the elephants might be sent to a distance, and I would gallop over to them and ride back after sunset. Sometimes it answered to alter this and to start on the elephants at or before daybreak, shoot till 11 A.M., and get back to office by noon, to sit writing and adjudicating till dark. The early morning fogs were great drawbacks to sport, hence I usually preferred to do the official work in the morning.

One morning I was uncertain; I was just ordering the elephants to be taken away and fed to be ready by 1 P.M., when some men came running to the tent saying that a comrade had just been seized by a tiger. They stated that there was no jungle, but that the tiger was in an open field, that the man was yet alive, and that all the villagers were watching from trees and house-tops.

I started at once, and first I came across the poor man on a litter. He was sensible and told me that he had gone out in the fog; he saw something red; on getting on to a mud wall to see better, the tiger (for the red thing

was a tiger) had rushed at him and bit him on the leg, and, strange to say, had then left him. His knee and leg were in a terrible state. I sent him in at once to the doctor at the station; but the shock was too much for him, and he died that night.

I went as I was directed, and, just as the fog began to lift up and the sun to shine, I saw the tiger stretching one leg before the other and scratching the earth. I walked the elephant steadily towards him. When about sixty yards off he rose up, and I gave him ball number one in the forearm. He came down at the elephant roaring and leaping, and I gave him number two. This knocked him down, but he was up and at me as I changed guns. Before I could fire again he had fixed his enormous paws in the guddy, and had seized the wood-work of the howdah close to my foot. I fired the double-barrelled gun as best I could, holding tight on to the howdah-rail with my left hand. This bullet missed. I then put the muzzle about an inch from his ear, and pulled the trigger. The ball passed through the back of his head. He fell off, carrying a piece of the wood-work of the howdah in his mouth. He then jumped high in the air and fell dead. The elephant behaved very well. Wood and iron-work, ropes and guddy, were all sound and well fastened; had anything of importance given way, or had the howdah been pulled down, I might not have been writing this letter.

I gave the head of this tiger to the doctor, and he made a nice preparation of the skull, with the shattered bones of the man's leg in the jaws; but, unfortunately, a jackal ran off with the human bones, and so nothing but the tiger's skull was left.

Letter No. 32.

Tigers not often met without being first reported.—A good fight, and Elephant badly wounded.—Certain animals show that Tigers are about. Vultures, Crows, &c.—Restless Hogs induce me to beat a jungle over again and kill a Tiger.—Tigers roaring.—Failure of sport owing to want of light. Fail also next morning.—Let an Elephant have a companion if game is to be beaten towards you, or they get frightened.—Some Elephants give notice when they pass a Tiger's track.—Tigers credited with much destruction really committed by Leopards.—Further remarks on this subject.

During a very long experience, it was seldom that I came across a tiger quite unexpectedly or by accident. As a rule, I was always told that tigers were about; they had been killing cattle lately, or their footmarks were observed, or we were specially beating up likely or well-known jungles. I have mentioned that the first tiger I saw was turned up most unexpectedly close to the indigo factory at Obhyah in Rajshahye. I came on one by accident to the

north of Noakholly. Budderuddeen had reported that there were hogs in some thickly covered tanks, and I had gone out with an Arab and spears. My howdah and guns, as usual, were on an elephant. Budderuddeen was superintending the beating from the howdah. At the very first side of the first tank he put up a large tiger, which came close to me as I was riding, and went into the jungle on another bank of the tank. I was off my saddle and into the howdah, and had the four guns loaded with ball in no time. The first shot wounded the tiger, and he at once turned and charged home. He seized an elephant belonging to the Bhullooah Ranee, planting one paw on each side of the trunk, and grasping the trunk itself with his teeth about four feet from the ground; and in this position the tiger remained for some time. I was afraid to fire. The elephant backed among the others, and the sides of the tank were rather steep and the thorns thick. It was some time before I could get a good shot. I hit the tiger rather low in his back, and he then dropped, and I gave him another barrel and then killed him.

This fierce tiger had, as far as I could ascertain, killed nothing in the neighbourhood. He had not been heard to roar, and none of the villagers knew anything about him. My idea was that he had only come from the hills, or from some distant jungle, the night before.

The elephant was very badly wounded both by claws and teeth. The trunk swelled to a great size, and for a long time the animal could not use it. Her food was put into her mouth, and water was poured down her throat from a bamboo tube. It was more than six months before she recovered.

When beating for tigers on general information, without exactly knowing where to expect one, when no late kill could be pointed to, and all that could be ascertained amounted to the fact that tigers were about and ought to be found, I have more than once been directed to the right quarter by seeing hogs moving away in an unusual manner. Crows, monkeys, and vultures are always to be watched. Monkeys show great terror, and chatter and move most restlessly about. Crows invariably watch the animal which a tiger kills, and try to peck out the eyes the very instant the tiger leaves his prey. The vultures watch the crows and each other, and no sooner does one vulture settle down to the carcase than black spots appear in the sky from all directions; these are vultures, who know that one of their race has found food. The crow will sit on the tree when the tiger is feeding. The vultures never alight in numbers till the tiger has left. The last to visit the carcase is the jackal. If you have heard of a kill in the afternoon and at early daybreak, on coming to the place with your elephants, you see overfed jackals leaving the jungle at your approach, you may know that the tiger has not been near the kill for hours; but if the jackals have been making a peculiar cry, known in Bengal as "the pheall," and if you see them lank and hungry-looking prowling round the jungle, you may be nearly certain that the tiger is still close to his victim.

A SCRIMMAGE WITH A TIGER.

I had been hunting for hours in most likely spots one morning, and was getting disappointed, when I observed first one hog and then another leave an unpromising piece of tree-jungle. There was no proper lying in it; it was distant from grassy cover; but why should two hogs leave their shelter when it neared midday? I went back and beat this place most carefully, and was rewarded by killing the longest, thinnest, and worst-skinned tiger I ever shot; he lay in the very last bush. I killed him as he lay, before he rose up, with a single ball. I had known of this tiger by his size and manginess, and had been looking for him and some of his relations for days. He had not killed any cattle lately, but in the last bush was a dead sow, which had not been long killed; it was not cold, and blood was running from wounds in the neck. Without doubt, the slaughter of this sow was the reason why the two boars left their jungle at that late time in the day; but for them I should not have shot that tiger.

Tigers often roar, and disclose their whereabouts by so doing; and at times they move about most silently, and their footfall makes no noise, even on dry leaves.

One morning in spring I got news that some tigers were roaring greatly in some jungles which I knew well; they were at some distance from my house. It was imperative that I should preside in office at some important revenue sales all that forenoon. I therefore sent on the elephants, and said I would ride over to the place as early in the afternoon as I could. When I got there I found that there were three large patches of thick bush- and tree-jungle; these stood in an extensive plain of high grass, which was then being burnt and on fire in many places. The wind was very high, and the flames roared and smoked, and the air was hot and stifling; the noise of the wind and the burning prevented one's voice from being heard almost. Time was short. I elected to beat the middle patch first. Scouts were placed, and the jungle was well searched, but no luck so far. Then I went to a second piece of jungle, and while the elephants were commencing to beat at the further end I distinctly heard tigers calling to each other in the patch of jungle which had not yet been touched. By dint of much blowing of the horn I always took in the howdah, I got the elephants to come to me, and arranged to beat this last jungle towards a strip not eighty yards broad, where I made sure of a shot; and they came, almost before I was ready, into the strip. But I could not catch sight of them; they stopped under the tree in which I had put a scout. He was greatly frightened, and shrieked out, "There are two! there are two! They will kill me! they will eat me!" His cries made the tigers bolt; but, alas! they went out the wrong side and got back to the thick jungle. It was already getting dusk. I beat this jungle well, but the beaters gave no sign. Suddenly my chuprassy touched me and pointed, and one of the tigers was standing looking at me; he had passed close somehow, and got past me without being noticed, even by the two elephants I had at the best spot of

vantage I could choose. I saw his head and chest, and fired and hit, I do not know exactly where. He sprang up with a roar, and got into dense leafy cover. I got the elephants together again; but it was now rather dark, and the mahouts distinctly refused to go into the jungle in the dark. I left the elephants, howdah, guns, and my shikarry in the nearest village, and before daybreak next morning I started on horseback and rode to the place, and began hunting again. I found the spot where I had wounded the tiger, and blood, and easily followed trail. Budderuddeen worked it out skilfully, and we followed it for more than five miles through grass and different kinds of jungle for several hours, but I never got up to the tiger nor ascertained its fate. This was pure ill luck. If I had had a companion with me or more daylight I might have killed those tigers. There was no kill, so probably they would have shifted their quarters had I not gone to them the first day. I never could make out why those tigers chose to be so particularly noisy on this occasion, though I have heard tigers call occasionally, and sometimes at night. They do not roar loudly, but make a short grunting kind of deep growl. I should say a tiger, as a rule, was a very silent animal.

If you have to guard a point of jungle, and to wait quietly for some time for game to be driven towards you, a single elephant soon gets uneasy and nervous; she keeps moving about, and after a little is ready to bolt away at the slightest alarm. You should always have a companion to stand with her; this will give her courage and keep her still. Once, when rather short of elephants, I was having a piece of forest jungle beaten towards me. Anything from a tiger to a hare, from a peafowl to a bush-quail, might have offered itself. I was on a very staunch elephant, from whose back many a rhinoceros and tiger had been killed, and with a good mahout. As I watched silently I heard pit-pat on the dry leaves, and so did the elephant. The footfall came nearer and nearer, till, just at the edge of the jungle where I was standing, a jungle-hen gave her single chuck-chuck of alarm. My elephant, who had already been fidgetting, went clean off in terror for quite two miles before she could be calmed. She was nervous the whole day after this. If once elephants get demoralized and nervous in this manner, the feeling spreads, and the whole number sometimes lose all pluck for a time. I have heard jungle-fowl and hares coming towards me often, but though tigers have often come to the edge of jungles when I have been watching, I do not remember to have heard the noise of their feet. It is very exciting when you are expecting to get a shot at a tiger to see the grass waving and to know that something is approaching. Occasionally a hare may sneak out; a deer generally smells the elephant; a boar often makes a sudden rush with tremendous grunts and causes great commotion; and sometimes I have seen a tiger just put out his head and take a calm, quiet look at things, and retreat as silently as he came.

One of my elephants never crossed the track of a tiger without making a

peculiar noise and striking her trunk on the ground. She was perfectly reliable, though at first I did not know it, and so lost a splendid tiger. She gave the sign, and I was on the *qui vive*, but suddenly three or four hogs rushed noisily off and disturbed the whole line. I thought it was at them that she was making that peculiar noise, and I beat on to the end of that grass. When quite at the other end, at least three hundred yards off, a large hairy-headed male tiger walked slowly into other long grass. It was in the rains—the plain was covered with feathery-topped grass, boundless in extent, and I never got on terms with that tiger.

Tigers are, I consider, blamed for a much greater share in the destruction of human life than ought fairly to be laid to their charge in Eastern Bengal. When once a person is killed by any wild animal it is invariably at first said that a tiger killed him. I believe leopards are much more destructive, and the mischief they do is attributed to tigers. Leopards sneak about villages and lie concealed in gardens and hedges; they will enter through doors and windows; they feed greatly on village dogs and goats, and when pressed by hunger seize sleeping women and children; they creep into curious holes and corners, hide in leafy branches, and frequent the covered-in gardens where the leaf eaten with the betel-nut grows; they prey on smaller animals and seek them as their regular food—animals and things that tigers do not come after. They are found, as a rule, much nearer to villages and houses than tigers. Tigers prey on cattle, however large they may be, on buffaloes wild and tame, on deer, the larger kinds for choice; they kill hogs, and follow game in the regular migrations which graminivorous animals are obliged to make in search of succulent herbage and proper drinking-water. But the leopard remains much more in one place; he feeds on any small thing he can get. He never, or hardly ever, attacks buffaloes or full-grown cattle. There were leopards near my house at Mymensing which I almost knew by sight from seeing them when hunting with fox-hounds or when pig-sticking or coursing hares, and when necessary I used to take friends out and show them leopards at once. But the destruction done by these leopards was scarcely worth notice, and complaints were unknown. But the moment a tiger (or a pair or more of them, for they go as often in parties as singly) established himself near a village, he made himself known and feared: cattle were killed; men were afraid; reports were sent to tiger-killing sportsmen, and in one way or another the tigers were made to move off, or the place was abandoned and the cattle taken elsewhere. Tiger-shooting, as a rule, goes on in jungles and grassy plains where game resort, and where large herds of cattle and buffaloes are fed and tended by herdsmen who live in temporary abodes at a distance from their village homes. Few of these Gowalas get killed by tigers; the tigers apparently prefer to feed on deer, hogs, and cattle, and when these become scarce, or are driven off, the tigers follow or go right away to distant jungles in search of food.

Letter No. 33.

Tigers attracted to the same spots. When one is killed, another may be expected after a few seasons.—Tigers as a rule haunt distant places. Leopards generally live near villages.—Tigers hide in very light jungle, and are sometimes passed by. Often leave heavy jungles at once: sometimes cling to them till the last.—Value of a Shikarry.—Beaters.—Different jungles. Sometimes uselessly overgrown, but get reduced by burning.—Patches and sides of nullahs.—Churs and tamarisk.—Forests.—Bhowal jungles. Rose-bush. Null.—Tanks. Taradhām.—Cane-brakes.—Screw-pine.

It has always been remarked how tigers come to certain parts of a district at certain times of the year and are absent at others. I have killed tigers over and over again in the same nullahs and in the same spots almost; you would almost think it was last year's tiger come to life again. But leopards seem to cling to the neighbourhood where they were bred, and to haunt it all the year round. Hogs often kill human beings; they will attack people who interfere with them. Tigers can be driven away by fires and incessant annoyance, and it is extremely rare for a tiger to attack a large body of men. More destruction to human life occurs from snake-bites, especially in the rains, than from all the dangerous quadrupeds in Bengal put together. To a certain extent tigers do good by keeping down the increase of deer and hogs, both of which prefer to feed on valuable crops. Leopards do no appreciable good in this way. In almost all the best beats I knew, where deer and hogs most abounded and were found together, tigers as a rule were to be expected and were generally found or heard of; but it was extremely remarkable that though leopards are far more numerous than tigers, how few were met with in general shooting. In looking at the bags made at the great sporting parties you will see so many tigers, bears, buffaloes, deer, and winged game, but the proportion of leopards killed is small. In short, tigers do not haunt villages or populous neighbourhoods, and leopards almost invariably prefer to be near villages where they can prey on pariah dogs, cats, goats, sheep, and domestic rather than large or fierce animals inhabiting forests or extensive jungles.

Very constantly I have gone to try and avenge the death of some man, woman, or child said to have been killed by a tiger, and it has turned out that the murder was the work of a leopard. I cannot, however, call to my recollection, nor find in my diary, any instance where a leopard was reported to have done the mischief when a tiger really was the culprit. I have killed many tigers who had taken at least one man's life, but I never killed a habitual man-eater. The old, toothless, bare-skinned or mangy tiger who fed solely on human beings, because he was too old and weak to catch deer and hogs, never came my way; I believe he is only to be found in books. But I have known several mischievous leopards that lived and fed apparently entirely on what they could get by nightly prowlings in villages. Leopards

make nearly as loud noises as tigers at night, and the Indian spirit of exaggeration is apt to magnify, so that all information regarding the size or mischief done by any reported wild beast should be discounted or accepted as only partially correct.

A tiger will hide himself in places where a cat or a hare, you would think, might be easily seen; they reduce themselves to the smallest possible compass and choose spots where the colour and markings of their skins correspond with the roots and stalks of plants. I have had a tiger shown to me asleep, and though within distance of his spring I have only been able to distinguish him after very careful examination. I have come to the very last bush of screw-pine jungle and almost have left it as untenanted, when a tiger, larger apparently than the bush itself, has appeared from under it. I have beaten all the nice and likely jungle, when I had positive and certain information that a tiger was close to me, and have found him finally in a patch of weeds only high enough, I would have thought, to have given cover to a civet cat. I have known a tiger almost conceal himself on the bare muddy sand of a river bank, and again I have known them retreat at once to the thickest, densest, and most impracticable jungle near. I have known them leave thick jungles almost at the first noise of the beating elephants; I have known them also remain crouching till the elephant has all but trod on them. If you have reliable information that a tiger has entered a jungle just before you came to it, if you can find no trace of its exit it is generally worth while to beat it again and again till you can account for your want of success. Under all these circumstances the value of your own shikarry is to be tested, and Budderuddeen's skill and persistence were often put to trial and he very seldom disappointed me. His ability to distinguish between a footmark a few hours old and one quite fresh, and his power of keeping an old boar's prints separate from those of the great sows, amounted to a kind of instinct. It constantly happened that ground was covered with footmarks, some a week, some a day, and some not an hour old; but these never caused him to lose time. I trusted him as a huntsman trusts the challenge of his most valued hound, and in tall grass followed the sign of his hand with perfect confidence.

Before I relate more tiger-hunting adventures I may as well allude to the different kinds of jungles and resorts most generally met with in the best districts. I know nothing of dry rocky grounds, or caves, or beats for tigers with bodies of men carrying drums and musical instruments. Almost all the tiger-shooting in Eastern Bengal is carried on from howdahs on elephants. Beaters may be used for deer, jungle-fowl, and partridges, and occasionally for hogs; but the latter are fierce, and savage hogs will defy any army of beaters. It would be murder to send unarmed beaters into a grass-jungle to beat up a royal Bengal tiger; but there is a certainty that no Bengalee beater could be induced to do such a thing. The utmost that could be done would be for the beaters to go a few yards out of sight and then get all

together and shout. A Bengalee will suffer pain courageously, but he is totally wanting in active courage or positive pluck of any kind. He in no way resembles a Seikh or a Goorkah, and you may rely on his bolting on every possible occasion.

Almost all the uncultivated plains of Eastern Bengal are grassy. In the rains the various kinds of grass grow to a height of from three to sixteen feet. There are grasses with stems nearly as thick as bamboos, and from these you can find every dimension of grass till you reach the silky grass used for thatch and for mat-making, and the spreading doob-grass, which is as good as food for your horses. Elephant-grass and bamboo-grass, kashia and ooloo and sun-grass, null and nurcot, and many other names you will soon hear. I do not pretend to know about these botanically. The shorter grass is generally cut for thatching; the long coarse grass is burnt as much as it can be as soon as it gets dry enough. The plains which cannot be beaten to any advantage in September become nearly bare in February. As the tall foliage gets burnt down and the cover restricted to patches, and when the green null and that grass which grows in a damp soil alone are to be seen fringing the numerous watercourses, or nullahs, which drain the plains, sport is at its best, and you know exactly where to beat. Plains and the banks of watercourses, when not covered with thick tree, and bush, and thorny jungle, and in the neighbourhood of forests and hills, are the spots which all Bengal sportsmen most delight to visit in the spring. In most districts there are churs or alluvial lands which, in addition to grass jungles similar to those on the plains, abound in patches of tamarisk or jhow. This jungle is always green and seldom gets burnt; it is a favourite resort for game, and except when very old, when it becomes like fir, tamarisk is easily beaten.

In some districts, Dacca and Mymensing for instance, there are extensive forests covered with lowish trees, chiefly saul or *Shorea robusta*, and innumerable varieties of trees and shrubs to which I never knew names put; grass generally grows high among these trees. The whole jungles are burnt; the grass burns quickly in March and April, and scorches the trees and restricts their growth. Water is often scarce in these jungles in the hot months, and game deserts the interior of these forests, except when driven there. The Bhowal forest and the Muddoopore forests are places such as I refer to. About these forests are scattered valleys, uninhabited, with perpetual water in their centres, surrounded with patches of rosebush-jungle and green null-grass, which are never burnt. In the rains these spots are inundated, and game cannot exist there; but after December, and till the rains come again, such delightful places attract all the game, carnivorous and herbivorous, and all birds, whether they be land-birds, web-footed or wading-birds, bustards, cranes, ducks, geese, or snipe. These are the spots you should hunt out and visit at the proper times; these were the scenes of my

best sport. From such splendid rosebush- and null-jungles I have turned out the biggest and fiercest of boars; in them I have killed the heaviest of fighting tigers, and buffaloes and sambhur, swamp-deer and bears; of floriken and partridges, black and khyah, I have made large bags. From these rose-bushes I have stalked up to and fired into flocks of ducks of almost all the kinds procurable in England, and many not known out of Asia. Here the graceful sayrus crane plays and dances and is seldom shot; here also, in the winter, come large flocks of coolen or common crane, which are invariably followed and shot at. If bagged there is no better bird on table than a crane killed on the 1st of February. In fact there are no places in India so delightful for all sorts of sport or which I delighted more in than these lone valleys near the Muddoopore or Bhowal forests, or at the foot of the Shooshung and Garrow Hills, and I believe similar enjoyable plains and valleys exist all along the base of the Eastern Himalayas. But southward of Dacca, that is in the districts of Tippera and Chittagong, few of these valleys are to be found; the hills covered with jungle quite to their base are met by cultivated fields, and rice grows till it touches the hills; this is the jungle-fowl land—a very nice shooting country in its way also, but far inferior to the rose-bush and grass-covered valleys of Mymensing.

In most parts of Bengal, in country once populated and since abandoned, as also near flourishing villages, large tanks are to be found; the high, wide banks on the sides of these tanks are generally covered with thickets of thorny bushes very hard to penetrate. Hogs, deer, and leopards are fond of these banks. The tanks are generally well filled with water, widely fringed with rushes and reeds. Very often these tanks, when neglected, are filled with a tall, very leafy, and strongly smelling plant that reaches a height of about twelve feet. We used to call this plant wild cardamum, from its smell; one of its native names was "taradhām." The same plant grows in extensive patches in marshy ground at the foot of the hills in the Purneah Terai and is often frequented by rhinoceroses. In the districts in which I generally shot it was a secure refuge for all kinds of game; the soil on which it grew was muddy or ponky, and would bear neither elephant, horse, nor man, though apparently fitted for tigers, hogs, and deer; it never got dry or combustible, and we never could get animals out even of the smallest patches of taradhām.

Cane-brakes or bênt-jungles abound all over the plains and villages of Bengal; these give shelter to hogs, deer, and every kind of game. Bênt is very difficult to beat; but good elephants can be gradually driven through it, and if a tiger or a boar retreats to it, he ought, by perseverance, to be made to leave it.

Screw-pine, or *Pandanus* (called "kewahbon"), is common in small patches near rivers, and forms favourite cover for tiger and hogs; it is very thorny and beaters can do nothing with it, but elephants should turn any animal out of it.

Letter No. 34.

Hill forests not practicable for sport.—Good ground in Assam, which may be reached near the Garrow Hills.—Shikarry should look up all grounds in the hot weather and early rains.—Dinkyboń.—Various districts.—Mymensing; confine my future remarks to that district.—Panch Tikree. Sowdaugor Mahout puts me below instead of above a Tiger.—A few days' sport at Tikree with two planters. Arrangements. Kill two Tigers. Kill a Bear, Hog-Deer, and Floriken.

The trees in the Bhowal and Muddoopore jungles are not very thick, or high, or thorny, and these forests can be traversed either on foot with difficulty, or easily on an elephant. But the jungles on the low hills of Chittagong, Tippera, Sylhet, and Mymensing are covered with bamboos and thorny and thick strong trees, and twining creepers render passage to a man difficult: an elephant slowly makes his way through these jungles. But neither these forests nor these hills can be considered as sporting ground; they serve as nurseries for every kind of animal, and large deer perhaps live in them all the year round, but by the generality of game they are regarded as sanctuaries from the hunter and as secluded retreats for bringing up their young. Jungle-fires and want of water send most of the game after the autumn to the grassy valleys and the neighbourhood of succulent crops. Ranges of low hills covered with jungles and separated by grassy valleys, perhaps several miles in length, exist on the borders of Bengal; in such valleys sport is always good when the jungle is reduced in size. Hill-buffaloes, and I am told the gour of Assam and Burmah, resort to such places. Personally I visited few such spots; I once beat up some between Comilla and Agurtollah, where the Rajah of Tippera lives, but it was at a bad season of the year and we got no sport. There are splendid hunting-grounds of this description in Lower Assam, near where the Brahmapootra touches the Garrow Hills. This I believe to be the best ground for sport now to be got at by Anglo-Bengalees. There are no better jungles than hoogla, to which I have often referred: this is a kind of tall flag or bulrush; it grows only on moist soil; it is not burnt, but much cut for thatching-purposes, near marshy grounds. Hidgel trees, which resemble dwarf oaks, grow, and grass and null and sometimes rose-bushes flourish among the hidgel-jungles. Hogs and buffaloes are fond of such places in the hot season.

Deserted villages, the sites of which are often covered with mandar and pulass trees, which are most resplendent when in flower, and mangoes that yield food for monkeys and hogs, are often grand places for shikar in March. Your shikarry should be able to tell you precisely where you ought to go so as to make certain of sport. In the rains he will know the high and dry spots; in the winter he will probably direct you to the neighbourhood of

cultivated grounds; in the early, hot season he will take you to the green unburnt patches and the grassy sides of nullahs. At some time of the year and at different seasons each of these varying hunting-grounds should be looked up.

In the islands of the Megna and in the Eastern Backergunge Soonderbunds, I came across jungles of high tree-like fern, called, in the language of the country, "dinkybon." These jungles formed splendid shelter for game: hogs at Siddhee were very fond of them, and tigers and rhinoceros lived in them on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. The leaves rustled, and it was impossible to move quietly through dinkybon-jungle; but it was very easy to beat. I never met with this jungle in any districts north of Backergunge and Noakholly. I do not, at present, recollect any other particular kinds of jungle to bring to your notice. If I were asked to describe the kind of ground I prefer most to beat, I should reply: the sides of a nullah in the middle of which water was to be found in the months of March and April, and whose banks were edged with a wide margin of ground bearing null, rose-bush, and leafy shrub-jungle bordered by open well-burnt grassy plains, and situated not far from forest-covered hills or extensive tree-jungles.

No member of the Bengal Civil Service could give an exhaustive description of the sport to be got in each separate district of Eastern Bengal from his own personal experience; it takes several years to master the details of a single district. I have been with tiger-shooting parties, in the course of twenty-five years, in Purneah, Maldah, Rajshahye, and parts of Rungpore and Bogra; but I could give no account of these districts which would authoritatively describe the whole of any of them. Noakholly and Dacca I knew well; there was no thanna, pergunnah, large village, river, or possible sporting-place in these two districts I was not acquainted with. I knew Mymensing well also: it was a large district; I looked on it as the best sporting district in Bengal. I failed to obtain an appointment to it in the days of my magistracy and collectorate duties; but I was stationed there for more than three years as judge, and for six years, as Commissioner of Dacca, I visited the district regularly at times. Still, though I worked the district as a sportsman for nine years, I was not able to visit many of its best pergunnahs.

The whole region stretching from Sylhet along the north of Mymensing, at the foot of the Shooshung Hills, was almost unknown to me. I know it abounded in large game, and that its jungles were hardly ever disturbed. This region was distant, thinly populated, devoid of any roads, difficult of access, liable to inundation, very seldom visited by any Europeans. As it lies in the direct route to nowhere, and possesses no large towns or marts, it may long remain a stronghold for tigers, rhinoceros, buffaloes, and sambhur and swamp-deer. In my remaining letters on tiger-shooting from the howdah I shall confine myself to sport in the Mymensing district.

The three most favourite beats, at a distance from headquarters, were the Panch Tikree valley, the churs bordering the Brahmapootra up to Lower Assam, and the Toldoodung valley.

I visited Panch Tikree at least a dozen times; it was a first-rate place for every kind of sport, and I shot there at all times of the year—in the Doorga-Poojah holidays, at Christmas, and at Easter. There were high grounds which afforded sport when the valley was like a lake; there where streams on whose banks you could shoot half the day down one side, returning in the afternoon up the other. Peafowl, bears, and sambhur were to be got on the side of the Bhowal forest; buffaloes, hog-deer, and partridges in the dense rose and null-jungles of the centre; the patches of grass all along the valley on both sides held hogs and floriken, and many times I turned up more tigers than one in a day. As there was a road nearly to the sporting-ground, I could ride or drive almost all the way, even on a moonlight night, in a few hours. I think that, next to Chur Siddhee, Panch Tikree was the spot I most liked in India for sport.

It was here that my Mahout Sowdaugor once put me almost under a tiger. A party of us were just ready for a long trudge towards the east for all kinds of game, fur or feather. Breakfast was over and the guns were being put in the howdahs, when news was brought of a kill close by, almost within sight. We were taken to a small patch of high dry grass on the bank of a steep nullah; scarcely had we formed line and began beating before there was an awful rumpus. Two tigers certainly, I believe more, probably three, had been all tearing at a poor cow together, and they started in different directions roaring and frightening the elephants. So quickly had they been found that no one was quite ready: some shots were fired; I do not think much harm was done; but Sowdaugor instantly followed one tiger in such haste that my elephant half tumbled, half slipped to the very bottom of the nullah. I was holding on to the front rail, like grim death, with both hands, when I saw a tiger on a sort of a ledge, his feet were just level with my solah topee, and I could have touched him with a hog-spear; luckily he sprung upwards, he might just as easily have jumped on me or the mahout. It was minutes before my elephant could climb up to the bank and reach a spot were we could see. I abused Sowdaugor with every epithet that long knowledge of low Bengalee had stored in my mind: for years I had tried to knock into his brain the fact that if he went down into a nullah he must prevent my getting a shot; he was foolhardy in his pluck, and would force his elephant anywhere and through and close to anything. When an elephant is rolling and tumbling about in his way, the sportsman in the howdah must hold himself and his guns in it or he may be smashed or thrown out. When I did get to the top I found the whole party scattered, and it was reported that several tigers had gone away in various directions: no doubt each tiger, when

seen three times, was spoken of as three tigers, and so on; but there were two, and I believe three.

Order having been restored, I put my friends into their places and placed a few elephants under the charge of each, and we began a proper systematic beat up the nullah: this resulted in success, and we had some fun killing a very good tiger, but we got no more in this excellent patch; but for Sowdaugor's foolery, in preventing all possibility of my either shooting or marking, we ought to have killed all that were feasting at the cow.

We next followed one of the tigers which had crossed the open plain and taken to extensive unburnt grassy jungles intersperced with nullahs: we put this individual up more than six times; he was the most wandering active tiger I ever pursued, he never seemed to rest in any jungle. We hunted for hours and for miles, and at times the chase was exciting; we never got fair shots at him, and in the afternoon we gave him up and took to deer and partridges and floriken on a beat towards camp.

Once in spring time, when grass is always fairly burnt down and marshy land as dry and solid as ever it becomes in the year, I arranged for a four days' general shooting expedition with two planter friends. We were to camp at Tikree, which gives its name only to a small part of the valley, and shoot over the best ground we could hear of within reach. Budderuddeen was sent to obtain all possible information. We all knew the ground pretty well and expected good sport.

D., the planter from Soobunkholly on the Brahmapootra river, was an old friend and a good shot both with ball and shot; he and I had ridden hogs and buffaloes, and shot geese and wildfowl many years before in Tippera. M., the other planter from Bygonbari, was a steady man in the howdah and accustomed to shooting tigers and large game. Both these gentlemen had their own elephants and howdahs and good mahouts; but I had to lend them both guddies after the first day, as theirs were inferior. We were all fond of hog-hunting, but the planters were not very well mounted at this time, and we had agreed not to attempt to ride hogs, for it almost always spoils both hog-hunting and shooting if you try to carry on both sports at the same time.

I drove and rode after sunset to a small collection of huts on the roadside, where we put up horses, and from this place I went a few miles on an elephant to the camp, which was pitched on the bank of the Bunsee river. Before turning in for the night we discussed the campaign with the shikarry and the mahouts.

Budderuddeen simply declared that there was every possible kind of sport you could desire, that ground and jungles were in the very best order and undisturbed—tigers, buffaloes, hogs, large and small deer, bears, floriken, black and khyah partidges, ducks, wildfowl, and snipe; but the tigers, which

to my knowledge had been doing a deal of damage for many weeks, had located themselves at least five miles off, on the opposite side of the valley. The arrangement settled was that the elephants should get all their chara (*i. e.* food for the day) in the early morning, that the servants should have their proper meals and be prepared for long days of work, and that we should start off after breakfast. The tigers were to be the first objects of pursuit.

So we all made a good start. My battery as usual consisted of the Daw-Jacob rifle, which carried curiously-shaped blunt conical balls of more than two-ounce weight, a breech-loading smooth-bore by Daw, and two smooth-bore and muzzle-loaders by Dickson. The planters had plenty of guns and rifles, but of varying bores and kinds. We did not waste time by beating up patches of grass on the road to the tiger-jungles; these, when we got to them, turned out to be thick patches of null and grass, with rose-bushes growing close to water, and nullahs—wide spaces which for half the year were so inundated that nothing except a bird could exist in them; but from February to April buffaloes and cattle, brought from a distance, were fed and milked here, the herdsmen living for the time in specially prepared huts, termed "gowal bārees." The herdsmen were prepared for us, and brought copious draughts of smoky milk in hollow bamboo utensils, and declared that they were quite ruined by tigers who took a cow at least daily.

The jungle was quite sufficiently extensive to require good and careful beating, but we were all well up to the work; and when in due time a tiger was roused, we kept the line close and even and beat the tiger quite to the end of the nullah side, where he was forced to disclose himself, and then we all saluted him pretty nearly at the same time; a good number of bullets were fired, with fatal effect in two instances, and we killed two fine tigers almost as soon as we were able to fire at them. I believe there was only one pair; we found no signs of more, and agreed to commence the attack now on all and sundry kinds of game. The ducks and the wildfowl generally were flying in large flocks; they had been disturbed by the firing, so we let them alone, as also the khyah partridges and the deer and hogs, which were numerous in this damp low part of the valley. We went nearer to the Bunsee river, which skirts the Bhowal jungle for several score of miles. Here the ground was dry; grass of a different kind was burnt, and only patches remained, and scattered all about, near the river bank, were thickets, with trees and taradhām, which would not burn, and here and there some patches of rose-bushes. In one of these latter I turned up a fine bear; but, in spite of my mahout's signal, I thought it was a large boar and did not shoot. The planters, however, got it; it charged one of them furiously, and made a deal of noise and died with painful groans; it was a very large bear, and had a skin in good order. After this we put up a fine buck gous or sambhur; it, however, at once rushed across the river into the forest and we lost it. We bagged several hog-deer and one floriken.

Letter No. 35.

Go after Buffaloes. Kill two.—Kill Ducks and Snipe.—Beat the banks of the Bunsee.—Sambhur Deer.—Peafowl and Jungle-fowl, Black Partridges, Hares, Floriken, Godwits.—A rare kind of Hare.—The total bag.—Strangers request me to show them sport. I endeavour to do so. Journey in haste from Dacca to the banks of the Brahmapootra. Put up a Tiger just before dark. Try the shouting dodge: it answers. Home by compass and starlight.—Another day at Tikree.

The next day, before breakfast, the herdsmen who had been present at the killing of the tigers brought news of a herd of buffaloes; these were still further away than the tigers, and the day was nearly half over before we sighted them. The null-jungles were very extensive, and a great deal of the ground was so muddy and deep and difficult for elephants, that by 4 P.M. we had only managed to kill two female buffaloes, and we were eight or nine miles from camp. We all voted buffalo-shooting from howdahs to be butchery and slow fun. On the way home we tried a little duck-shooting; we carefully examined the position of the flocks with reference to shelter behind which to approach them, and then we let drive into the sitting flocks with the first barrels, and fired second barrels into them as they rose; in this way we bagged eleven or twelve couple, chiefly blue-winged teal; then we blazed away at the snipe, which were numerous and lay well in the little cultivation which there was at this time of the year. It consisted of borudhān, a kind of rice grown in the spring on lands which only then became dry enough to be cultivated. We did not reach camp till long after dark.

Next day we started from close to camp and beat down the sides of the Bunsee stream, and all the patches of dry grass on the plain and several thickets of trees and shrubs near the river, but detached from the forest: we killed two very large sambhur does. Then stuck steadily to thick cover which required to be well beaten out. It takes a long time to put a heavy sambhur on an elephant's back. When we had padded the second of these deer, we sent them off to camp. Some beautiful peacocks and their hens and some jungle-fowl afforded sport from these thickets, and the grassy patches standing far out in the open plains were full of hog-deer, hogs, black partridges, hares, and here and there a floriken. The hog-deer were wilder than usual; there was no firing at them in the grass, they took flight at once over the open plains: the way we missed them was marvellous; I know of nothing much harder to hit than a hog-deer at beyond seventy yards when the elephant from which you are shooting is moving or shaking. We bagged six I think, and two florikens, ten couple of black partridges, two couple of peafowl, two couple and a half of jungle-fowl, ten hares, some civet cats of

the large kind and some of the small—genets, I believe, is the name—and we put up several splendid boars. I always have regretted that I never speared a hog in this valley; but, as I have before remarked, often in Mymensing hog-hunting was superseded by shooting from the howdah.

Next morning M. and D. got up rather early and took a turn on foot at another jheel in a different direction. The first thing we saw was a very large flock, several hundreds of birds flying about. Budderuddeen called them "chota-choppers," which meant little curlews. M. and D. got well up to them, and in the discharge of the four barrels we knocked over twenty-eight; they turned out to be godwits. We then tried to get some golden plover, but failed to circumvent them; after this, for the little time that remained before breakfast, we shot snipe; these birds when disturbed seemed to me to go away to the forest for shelter.

In this day's shooting we tried the western side of the valley; the whole jungle on this side consisted of thatching and other grass, very good for hog-deer, hares, and partridges, of which we made good bags. We got three florikens (these delicious birds are looked upon as prizes, much the same as a woodcock in an ordinary pheasant-battue in England), and we also killed two of those curious bristly hares called, in Jerdon's 'Mammals,' *Lepus hispidus*. I never met with this animal except near the Bhowal jungles; very little is known of it; its skin tears so easily that I entirely failed to preserve a single skin all the time I was in India. I do not think there is one in the British Museum. Except sportsmen who have shot about Dacca and Mymensing I never met with anybody who knew anything about the animal at all, and Jerdon's account is meagre. When the expedition was over we made the bag out to be: two tigers, one bear, two buffaloes, five floriken, four peafowl, five jungle-fowl, two large sambhur or gous-deer, eighteen hog-deer, about fifty couple of partridges (mostly black), twenty or twenty-five hares, about twenty-four ducks (of which one pair were grey ducks and the rest blue-winged teal), a good number of common snipe, twenty-eight godwits, and a lot of miscellaneous odds and ends. This may not seem a wonderful bag for four days; still I do not remember ever making a better, taking the variety into consideration and remembering that two tigers and a bear alone would have been thought to mean better luck than usual. I have still to write to you about the times when I killed more tigers in a day, and beats when the slaughter of deer was murderous; but I never enjoyed an expedition of four days' continued sport more thoroughly, or passed a more agreeable time than I did with those two indigo-planters in the valley stretching from Tikree southwards in the neighbourhood of the Bhowal forest.

Writing of Tikree, I am reminded of an expedition which I was persuaded to get up at very little notice for the Earl of G., who had come out to see some sport in India. A Harrow friend of his, who I had known all my life, wrote and asked me to introduce both of them to a real tiger, and to give

them some shooting at big game; my friend had never seen anything bigger than a snipe since he left home, business having tied him in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. I arranged for carrying on my official duties in the upper part of Mymensing, and beat up for these two gentlemen some of the best ground on the churs near the Brahmapootra that I knew of. Unfortunately I had visited it twice in four preceding seasons; no country will stand such constant attacks. The sport was not so good as I expected. We found no game on these churs except tigers, hares, a few floriken and khyah partridges; our total bag in eight days was four tigers killed and two mismanaged, which we did not kill. I only allude to the expedition to tell you about the first tiger which Lord G. killed when it was almost dark.

My friend and Lord G. came to Dacca by rail and steamboat, and slept one night at my home. By levying contributions of horses and carriages from friends, and by very hard work, driving the first forty miles or so to Birmee, then riding to Toke, then driving to Gaffergaon, and going the rest of the journey on horseback, we got to Mymensing station in twelve hours and a half, and in two more days we got to my camp at Dewangunge. It is no easy matter for even an experienced shikarry like I was, aided most kindly and ably by friends who lent me carriages and about fifteen horses, to transport three European gentlemen, two of them with most of their guns and luggage, to such a distant camp. In this instance I found every single thing for my guests—knives and forks, beds, baths, and towels, prog and grog, howdahs and elephants, all but clothing, batteries, and ammunition—and started in fair order in battle array on the 15th February, 1868.

The first day we had no luck at all. I had not been able to have the country properly looked over by Budderuddeen, but both he and I knew it fairly. From our knowledge we were positive that there were several tigers on these churs: we came on plenty of tolerably recent kills, and footmarks abounded in every jhow-jungle. The cowherds would give no assistance; they thought that if they gave information by which we might kill tigers, the ghosts of the tigers or relations would retaliate by slaughtering their cattle after we should leave. At the close of the second day, after the sun had set, I was trying to induce a herdsman to tell me where these tigers had taken up their abode. I caught sight of a tiger crossing an open sandy place going into a heavy patch of jhow-jungle, and I knew in one instant that we might kill him with luck, if light would only last.

I told Lord G. that I would post him, with one elephant to keep him company, at a spot where I felt sure the tiger would break in an attempt to return to the main jungles; and I recommended him, if he should knock his tiger over with one shot, to follow up at once, and fire again and again into him, till he was dead, for he would get but one chance that evening. The patch of jhow was about five acres; it was all about fifteen feet high, and completely hid the elephants. It would have been impossible to have shot from the inside of such

a jungle, and yet there was no difficulty in passing through it with the line of elephants. I took the centre myself, put my friend on one side and Budderuddeen on the other, and directed that every man and attendant should, as soon as the line moved on, shout, and continue shouting as loud and continuously as possible; and so we all did, and a very tidy hullabulloo we made. Before we were half through the jungle, and before men's lungs had begun to fail or their tones to get hoarse, we heard first one shot, then another, and a third. I stopped shouting, blew my horn, and hurried forward, and found Lord G., and a short heavy male tiger which he had killed. Lord G. said the beast walked out close to him, and offered the easiest of shots; he fell to the first shot, and was then easily disposed of. Had this tiger chosen to hang to the jhow-jungle, or had he been only slightly wounded and gone back into it, we never could have bagged him in such darkness. I believe nothing but the shouting would have made him sneak quietly out as he did.

This was so far satisfactory: the two guests had seen their first tiger. We padded him, and then came the march home to camp. I had a compass, and we steered by it and the stars over this lonely chur-land. We did not meet a single individual, nor had we a landmark of any sort till the white tents shone out in the bright starlight. We dined about 9 P.M., and after dinner superintended the skinning of the tiger by torchlight.

The expedition had not been so fortunate as I expected, and we had found no large game except tigers, so, as our time was all but expired, I offered to give my friends a day of miscellaneous shooting in the Tikree country; and on the 28th February we had our farewell day in that valley, killing ten hog-deer, fifteen brace of black partridges, thirteen hares, and one floriken. Next day Lord G. went to Soobunkholly factory on the Brahmapootra, and thence down stream to the railway at Goalundo. After working up arrears at the head station of Mymensing, I started for hog-hunting: but when riding the very first hog I got about the worst fall I ever had in my life; my knee was so hurt that I had no strength in the saddle for more than a year, and for all that time I lost all the best fun. The hogs had peace for the whole time; but after the rains I was well enough to shoot from a howdah.

LETTER No. 36.

Bees at Mymensing.—Bees and Tigers at Chur Gabsāra. Difficulties at Gabsāra, and how they were met.—Ponky ground.—A Leopard; one Tiger.—Divide forces and catch the Tigers on their way back to the bees.—A long shot.—A Tiger on the open sands.—The benefit of a breech-loader.

MYMENSING is famous for bees and honey. The bees fixed their combs in the verandahs of my house, and at times were great nuisances; so I had them removed by professional honey-takers, who cut down the combs and anointed the beams with garlic and stinking stuff, and thus rid me of bees in my house for ever. I have known bees roused to anger during a pig-sticking party attack the elephants, horses, and men, and spoil the whole day's sport. Horses broke loose and were not caught till next day, elephants became unmanageable, and men were so stung that severe fever was brought on. Some of the hunters rushed into tanks and kept putting their heads under water. The best thing a mounted man can do under these circumstances is to ride fast up wind, through bushes or jungle if possible; if he can put any high foliage between himself and the pursuers he will be safe.

There was a place called Gabsāra, where tigers had made a home for more than two years. Shikar parties had gone from the Bogra district more than once to this place, which was on the Mymensing side of the Brahmapootra, to kill these tigers, but had failed on account of a large colony of bees, which turned them out of the jungles. We thought it a stain on the honour of the Mymensing sportsmen to let Bogra men kill our tigers, so I resolved to go for these Gabsāra animals, and sent Budderuddeen to report.

His report was discouraging. He came back and stated that tigers certainly were numerous and the jungle easy enough for beating, but that the bees had several enormous combs, and that, besides all this, there was a worse feature in the country, which, in his opinion, had prevented the former hunting-parties from having success. This was the nature of the ground or soil. The small chur of Gabsāra consisted of light sandy soil brought down by the Brahmapootra river, which had hardened on the top of moist quicksand. The consolidated earth was not two feet in thickness, and elephants would not cross it for fear of being imbedded in the quicksand called "phassun." Here our Noakholly experience came to our assistance. Budderuddeen was a Noakholly man, and had been with me in all my hog-hunting days on the Megna churs. I had a good revenue map of Gabsāra chur, and made out with Budderuddeen the shape of the jungles and the course of the streams left as the large river gradually decreased in volume after the rains. It appeared that the bees were congregated all in one particular patch of jungle. I sent Budderuddeen and Sowdaugor and two elephants to study the places and arrange

an attack; they were to find out, if possible, where the elephants could cross the several phassuns, and then these crossings were to be made safe by thick layers of bushes, jhow, and grass jungle, and each crossing to be marked by sticking in a tall bamboo with a streamer atop, so that, when necessary, we might at once take the elephants to a practicable crossing-place.

I think I had one companion part of the time, and that two more joined us.

When I got to the ground I found that there were several practicable crossings. The first crossing was a curious sight, and considerably alarming to the nerves of men who were unaccustomed to phassun. As the ponderous elephants marched across the prepared places, the whole surface of the land on both sides for about a hundred yards waved about and undulated up and down, but fortunately we never once broke through the upper crust. I had seen elephants similarly managed in a hog-hunting party near Pubna before I went to Noakholly, so I was fairly confident that we should get over the phassun difficulty.

Next we had to consider the bees. These I found had taken up their homes in one large patch of jungle. Of course this was the best jungle in the whole chur, and, under ordinary circumstances, would have been the most likely place for the tigers. What with the tigers and what with the bees, the jungly part of the chur and all the nice grassy grazing-ground close to it had been abandoned, and the cattle were fed at a considerable distance inland, so the tigers had to go to a distance for food, and were in the habit of retreating to these jungles for shelter.

So I determined to leave the patch in which the bees were undisturbed. Bees are much more vicious and irritable at certain times than they are at others. For instance, a whole colony of bees, following their queen, have been known to settle upon a man without stinging him, and to go off again after their queen without doing injury. The bees in my verandah were very spiteful at times, annoying everybody and every animal; at other times they would be quite peaceable, and take no notice of anything short of positive interference. I believe at my visit to Gabsāra they were in a pacific temper.

It was Christmas-time: on the 24th December I began by beating a beautiful jungle not very far from the bees. We beat quietly away from their direction, and evidently soon disturbed game—probably more tigers than one. The jungle was of a kind often met with in the wide sandy plains near rivers—thin jhow, with patches of a flowery hybiscus plant and a low green, tender-leaved, strongly-smelling shrub, much frequented by hares and civet cats. While beating this I saw a large leopard standing still, and I bagged him with one shot. He measured nearly nine feet, was the largest leopard I ever killed, and nearly the only one I ever found consorting with tigers. It seemed to me that the tigers we had disturbed had gone to the bee-jungle; I declined to follow

them, and went on searching all the likely places to the eastward. We put up one fine tiger, and, after the usual beating for nearly half an hour, got him into a corner and killed him. That was all done on the 24th.

On the 25th, after a careful examination of the position of the jungles, and from the fact that several very fresh tracks showed that tigers were probably lying in some strips of jungles leading towards the bees, I arranged to go round by some of the prepared crossings and take up a position not very far from the bees; so if the others of the party should put up tigers and send them towards the bees, I could meet them on their road. For two hours I stood on the appointed spot, and reviewed all operations with a binocular. The mahouts and attendants wrapped themselves in blankets, and I had a cloth round my head. We were very silent. Several troops of bees came buzzing around, but did no harm. I saw in the far distance that my friends had found tigers, and heard several shots; in fact they had put up some tigers, and after some time and a deal of shooting they bagged a tigress. Gradually, and after what appeared to me much needless delay, they seemed to be beating in my direction, and at last a shot let me know that they had again come on a tiger. I had no concealment about me at all; the three elephants stood together on the open sand as near the bee-patch as we dared. Presently a fine tiger came to the edge of the strip, evidently meaning to cross the open and go to the bees. He stood perfectly still at about one hundred and eighty yards, as well as I could judge. I took a steady aim with the Daw-Jacob rifle, and by great good luck struck him hard with a bullet weighing more than two ounces. This was, I think, the best long shot I ever made from a howdah in my life, though perhaps one at a bear in Bhowal was as good. The tiger gave a roar and went back to the strip. I hastened across the open, got to a marked crossing-place, and just reached the right place as the others came up; the tiger roared and charged splendidly, but I sent him back, and the others received him with a volley, and now three of the Gabsāra tigers were disposed of.

We had some sport with another. News was brought that a tiger had gone out on the sands in the direction of the river. There was positively no jungle at all—a few twigs of jhow which would not have hidden a curlew. A number of respectable Mahommedans, mostly mounted on wee Bengalee ponies, had been watching the sands since the tiger had been viewed, and a deputation of villagers had come to tell us. So we all started off, perhaps two hundred men on foot and twenty on ponies. We travelled along for miles on the solid cultivated lands; the men on foot went along the sands, which were too treacherous to be trusted for elephants. After many miles we came to the watchers, and they declared that the tiger was somewhere between them and the river, that he certainly had never gone off, and that the sands were firm. It seemed absurd; but we made a long line and advanced a long way due west towards the river; and there certainly, from some depression in the ground,

got up a large fierce tiger, and he at once came roaring towards us from at least two hundred yards off. The long scattered line of elephants took closer order and several shots were fired, but most of the elephants, my trusty one excepted, took fright at the roaring; they all got together in a heap, and putting their heads in the centre, kept their tails towards the tiger, and were so uneasy and unmanageable that the men in the howdahs could get no shooting. One of these was an experienced shikarry, but he at this critical moment managed to put a large bullet into a barrel which was too small for it, and he could not ram it down. Anyhow in the confusion the party was rendered powerless for the few important minutes, during which my elephants were steady and I got all the fun, firing about seven shots altogether from the Daw-Jacob before the tiger lay quite motionless and harmless on the sand. It is advisable to have all your weapons of the same bore; mishaps of this kind interfere terribly with success, and a scrimmage seldom lasts many minutes.

On examining this tiger after he was taken to camp, we cut several of the large elongated Daw-Jacob bullets out of his body, and no bullets of any other kind had hit. I will now give you some particulars connected with an expedition to the Brahmapootra churs between Mymensing and Assam, and after that I will bore you no further with tales of tiger-shooting from the howdah.

Letter No. 37.

An expedition to the Brahmapootra Churs for Tigers. Want of knowledge beforehand. Too early for the best sport. My two companions. Buckland and his style of managing Elephants. Lyall, the straight man. Open sport with a Tiger in very light jungle. Poor sport and very bad weather. A gun bursts. Hot on Rhinoceros, but no luck. Sport improves.—Hog-hunting destroyed by the armed police. Anecdote as to the smartness of these police as soldiers.—Kill three Tigers.—Grand sport at Churs Gothail, Tubra, and Hurgela. Five Tigers in one day.—Curious effect of a shot.—Fine scene with a jumping Tigress.—Remarks as to Tigers jumping on Elephants. Elephant rolls up her trunk when a Tiger charges.

On the 1st of February, 1866, three of us met at my house in Mymensing for a tiger-shooting expedition to the chur country lying along the banks of the Brahmapootra river, between Mymensing and Lower Assam. Unfortunately my diary gives no proper data to assist me, as on this occasion it merely records dates and names of places and distances, and the tigers killed on certain dates. There is no mention of the various kinds of deer, or of the floriken or partridges we bagged, so I shall say little about them. We were

a month too early and very little grass had been burnt, and on this account we had to give up much country in which I had anticipated the very best sport. Worst of all none of us knew the country in the least, and although Budderuddeen was with me and made himself extremely useful as a shikarry, I had not been able to use him as a scout beforehand for more more than one day. Our only guide was the mahout of my elephant; in addition to being rather a fool generally, he insisted on urging us to go to the same places and act exactly as a former master of his had done many years before. In the mean time his recollections had almost vanished, as had nearly all the particular jungles he talked about; for the most part these spaces had been cultivated, and all the country which by his account we were to find swarming with deer, and with likelihood of a rhinoceros at least every other day, was covered with high and almost impenetrable coarse grass, in which the line of elephants was at once hidden and sport could not be expected till the spring fires had raged among it for at least a month. Nevertheless we had some days of brilliant sport and bagged more than a score of tigers. I had two companions, Messrs. Buckland and Lyall; both of these gentlemen have been mentioned in earlier letters as being present at Lord Mayo's hog-hunting party; both were, like myself, members of the Bengal Civil Service. Buckland was quite the best manager of a line of elephants in jungle hard to beat that I knew; no general remarks, such as "Push on, my men!" came from his mouth. In an extraordinary short time he learnt the name of each mahout and his animal, and as sure as one was in fault, whether too forward or, what was more likely, a little behind, that man and his elephant would be singled out by name and treated to most forcible language in the vernacular. If this did not rouse him to exertion nothing would. Buckland was always ready to take the centre of the line and go himself into the densest and thorniest places, leaving the chances of the best shots to others. Our friend Lyall was keen and true—very good after a hog with the spear, and not to be discouraged by any difficulties. We had taken leave from Government and for the time were not bothered with official duties.

We opened the campaign on February 3rd rather late in the day. Budderuddeen had worked a tiger into some grassy jungles leading into the open plain, and too light apparently for large game. I had considerable difficulty in restraining my two friends, who wished to fire at floriken and such insignificant animals, while I was desirous of making sure of the tiger; in fact they thought the jungle too light and distrusted my man, whereas I trusted him implicitly. The jungle was beaten out and all that remained was a long patch of low weed, rubbishing stuff called in Bengalee "beeskatāli," or bug-poison. I determined to beat this, for I knew that sometimes cover only apparently sufficient for a hare might conceal a tiger. Out of this beeskatāli she jumped with a roar, and after a few shots we bagged tiger number one. On the way back we slaughtered hares and birds.

But these jungles were altogether too light. Next we tried large tracts of land covered with jhow, and agreed to spend no more time here. Our camp was accompanied with boats and we could accommodate ourselves on streams or at a distance from them. Late on the 6th we bagged the second tiger; on the 7th, 8th, and 9th we shot over splendid ground for all sorts of game, but the grass was unburnt. There were tigers about, but no getting at them. We came on a young tiger's body, the greater part of which had been eaten by other tigers. On the 10th we saw a tiger, but failed to bring him to bag. On the 11th and 12th it rained for thirty-six hours out of the forty-eight. Up to this we had no remarkably good sport; we had bagged only one out of two bears, and Lyall had burst a gun. On the 13th we were hot on rhinoceroses, but we never positively fired a shot at one; towards the close of the day we had great fun with a savage tigress and secured her, and next day we got another tiger. No tiger for the next two days, by which time we had moved camp to Rajaballa Hath. Up to this we certainly were disappointed, because better sport might have been got near Mymensing; but on the 17th we had a capital day, first killing three buffaloes and then two fine savage tigers. The country required to be much more burnt up. Up to the 25th we were still unlucky as regarded tigers. Lyall and I tried a beat for hog-hunting; we only got three boars. The reason of this was that there was a police station near, manned by a number of police of quasi-military character, composed of men belonging to castes which eat pork; these policemen spent their time in shooting hogs. I found a heap of about a hundred pigs' heads behind the thanna. We were now in the non-regulation provinces. I never could exactly define the difference between non-regulation provinces and regulation provinces. One authority had laid it down that in the latter there was some law and in the former no law. The following anecdote may serve to show how police matters are carried out in non-regulation districts. Buckland, who was a Volunteer officer of some standing, was requested to see the police drilled, and some dozen of them came to parade with the muskets used for pig-slaughter. "Stand at ease!" "attention!" "shoulder arms!" and some such motions were gone through. Then came the order "Right face, march!" A few men at the one end of the line marched north, and a few at the other marched south, and those in the middle stood still. We of the regulation provinces laughed consumedly. The men were got together again, assured that they were valiant soldiers, and the parade was dismissed. This, however, was not tiger-shooting, so we broke up camp entirely and retraced our steps to try chur jungles nearer Mymensing. And now we came in for luck. On the 26th we got to some practicable jhow-jungles at Sherazabad and had a good day, killing three tigers. Then we got proper news of tigers at Chur Gothail, and on the 28th we beat up some jungles at places called Tubra and Hurgela. Here the footmarks of tigers were more numerous than in any place I had ever been, but the jhow-jungle was just as high as an elephant's

head; it was easy to beat and get through, but difficult to see in. Evidently we were close to tigers—my unerring elephant said so plainly; still we beat a splendid patch and saw nothing. Buckland seeing a number of men waiting by the river side left us to inquire what they were at; while he was gone I and Lyall resolved to beat these patches again, for I was sure there was a tiger near. While Buckland was finding out the difference between a real general, who the men said they were waiting for, and whose coming to these districts might have been connected with some frontier outbreak, which, owing to our absence from civilized parts, we had not heard of, and a supervisor or superintendent general of some petty poliee office, Lyall and I came suddenly on a lot of tigers. It was difficult to get good shots at them, and they roared and dodged about in different directions and the firing was hot. Buckland came hurrying back, but I think we had disposed of two before his arrival; some had crossed an opening to another patch. We turned out number three before Buckland, who planted a ball in him, which had a most curiously ludicrous effect. The tiger could not raise his head from the ground, but kept spinning round and round, his head in the centre, his hind quarters and tail high in the air. He kept up this teetotum kind of game for some time and then we gave him a volley and stopped it. There were no more tigers in this patch, so before going on we had to pad these three; this took a long time. Then we made a beautiful line to beat the next great jungle of similar jhow-trees. The three elephants, each with a tiger on the guddies, looked lovely. I wish an artist could have depicted the party about a quarter of an hour afterwards, when an active tiger bounded over the top of the jhow with loud roar and arched back, tail up, and ears laid back; he jumped fifteen feet in the air. This was merely to enable him to see exactly what was going on. In his next bound he was right on to the head of my old elephant "Shamkholly." He did not pull the elephant down, and the mahout struck the tiger on the head with all his force with the heavy elephant-goad; this made him let go, and as he moved off we fired and he was killed. This was number four; but there was another yet. We beat steadily on, and after some delay got our fifth tiger. I never shot five tigers at any other time. I have heard of it being done, and perhaps if you hunt up old prints in Calcutta you may still find an absurd picture of the judge of Rajshahye killing five charging tigers at once. The judge told me particulars, but I cannot remember them. I have killed three tigers in a day more than once, and Lyall and I killed three soon after this glorious day, as you shall hear.

The tiger did not jump clean on to the elephant's head; it is very seldom that tigers do so jump, in my opinion. Their object, I believe, in these home-charges is to pull the elephant down; they fix both front claws well into the trunk and, biting with all their power, try with their weight to bring elephant and howdah headlong to the earth; in the same way they fix claws and teeth

into the guddy and howdah. I have seen scores of such attacks, but I never saw a tiger bound clean on to an elephant; this could easily be done; and the tiger in question jumped, as just related, into the air twice the height of an ordinary elephant, and could as easily have leaped into any of our howdahs or into any of the mahouts'. I have heard of charges in which the tiger has fixed his claws in a mahout's thigh; I never saw such a wound, and, as the thigh is always behind the elephant's ear, I do not understand how it could happen. But these views of mine have been more or less controverted; but I never actually got chapter and verse for the fact of a tiger having bounded high in the air and having alighted clean on to a howdah or on to a man on an elephant. Elephants have been pulled down; but luckily such a contretemps never occurred to me; nor in all my lengthened tiger-shooting experience was any man of my party hurt by a tiger. A leopard once jumped clean on to myself and took me into a bush and shook me; but this was owing to my own folly, and will be noticed in letters about leopards.

When a female elephant is charged by a tiger she rolls her trunk up to keep it out of danger, and lowers her head and fore part of her body, and thus offers a most tempting place for a tiger to attack; and most of the elephants I have seen wounded by tigers were bitten and torn below and between the eyes and on each side of the top of the trunk. I have, of course, also seen a tiger fix on to the hinder parts and sides of an elephant; but this was because the elephants turned off when the tiger came roaring at them. The excitement and fun in these scrimmages is very grand, and if every tiger would fight, and if a few more could be found in tiger-expeditions, I might put tiger-shooting as a sport before hog-hunting; but, as I have said before, hog-hunting is the finest sport to be got in Eastern Bengal.

I must hasten on to a still more exciting tiger-scene than the above.

Letter No. 38.

Best day's sport of all.—Hear of Tigers at Kewah Chur, and visit it late in the day. Swim Elephants across. Wound a Tigress and take cubs. Leave howdahs on the island and Elephants in the village on the mainland.—Sport on the island next day. Find some fighting Tigers, which repeatedly put us to flight. Put my howdah on a stauncher Elephant with Sowdaugor Mahout, and at last kill those fighting Tigers and a third. Remarks on the day.

We had now come to March. February had been cold and at times exceedingly wet, and all the arrangements against discomfort which I have referred to in earlier letters as to tents and storms had to be carried out. The March winds now began to blow and the dried grass of the jungles burnt furiously when

properly fired. Lyall and I rode long distances, making inquiries, and by this means heard of kills of which we should have known nothing had we remained with the elephants. We had a good day at Neelee chur and bagged two good tigers. After this Buckland was obliged to leave us, and Lyall and I went on by ourselves. We had heard that there were several tigers on Kewah chur.

When we got to this place we found it to be an island in the Brahmapootra river, separated from the mainland by a wide deep stream. We had to get boats and transfer howdahs and guddies to the boats and then to swim all the elephants across, and then the howdahs &c. had all to be fastened on again. These operations consumed hours. When we did start for shooting we found ourselves on a rather extensive island of which no one knew anything. We knew nothing of the shape of the jungles; they seemed very fit, however, and though there were no houses, there were numbers of cattle, and from the dead carcases in every direction it was clear that the tigers were having a good time of it.

During the short time we hunted the first day we put up tigers, and we wounded a tigress badly—at one time we thought mortally—but we never actually bagged her. We thought she might have dropped over the high bank of the river or have fallen dead in some secret place; but as we heard of her again, this was not the case.

In the jungle from which we had ousted this tigress my elephant had given her sign that there were other tigers at hand, so we beat it again, and each time that we reached a particular part of the high jhow-jungle, she kicked with her fore feet and made her peculiar noise. Having beaten this place four times, it occurred to me that there must be cubs, and by looking very carefully, and beating almost inch by inch, we discovered them. Lyall was half off his elephant in a minute; but I peremptorily desired him not to get down so soon. We knew we had a badly wounded tigress close by; a poor friend, well known to both of us and mentioned in earlier letters as the Collector of Tippera, had only lately lost his life by going alone to a tiger which he thought he had killed the day before. I made a ring of the elephants and carefully ascertained that there was no tiger in that ring, and then taking every precaution we could, Lyall and an attendant got down and handled the cubs; there were three, I think—pretty little creatures, unable to run about. We took two, and as it was now near dark and we were a very considerable distance from home, we left the other cub in the hopes that the mother might come for it.

When we got to the deep stream we left all the guddies and howdahs on the sandy bank for the night. We took guns and ammunition across in the boats and swam the elephants back to mainland. Next I arranged that the mahouts and attendants should put up for the night in the nearest village and take charge of the guns; orders were given that the elephants should gather

all necessary food in the early morning, for there was nothing for them in the island. Lyall and I then rode to the tents some miles off, and by 9.30 A.M. next morning we rode back and rejoined the elephant party.

We got across the river as quick as we could, and the howdahs were fixed on the elephants with the least possible delay. My favourite elephant "Lucky" had had rather more than her fair share of howdah-carrying lately, and my howdah on this eventful day was placed upon "Nayuntara," a nice-paced, strong elephant who had hitherto been sufficiently staunch; but on this day she disgraced herself greatly and showed much cowardice. We were told that the tigress which we had wounded on the preceding day had been seen sneaking slowly back towards the jungle where we got the cubs, and there were tigers in some jhow at the south of the island. We went first after the tigress; the cub which we left had disappeared and we found no trace of a tiger in that patch. We thought it most likely that the mother, and she probably was the tigress we had wounded, had removed her cub in the night; it was, however, quite possible that other tigers had come across the cub and devoured it, and also that the tigress we wounded might not have been the mother.

We next went to the south of the island and prepared to beat an exceedingly promising strip of jhow-jungle. It was a quarter of a mile long and not broader than two hundred yards; the jhow-trees were about eight feet high, growing very thickly together, with pliant stems. It was easy to beat, that is elephants passed through it with ease; but they left no tracks at first, and any animal moving in front of the line was almost invisible. There appeared no reason why a tiger should not be forced to leave such a jungle and take to the open; but, as was so common in these thick covers, the tigers preferred to remain under shelter.

Before we had gone one hundred yards into the jhow two tigers attacked the line with great uproar. A panic at once seized the elephants, and they all bolted, and we were driven clean out of the jungle without having fired a shot. We re-formed line and went at them again; we had the greatest number of elephants in the centre, then Lyall was on the right, and I was on the left, and we each had two elephants outside of us. A second time we were attacked and disgracefully routed; our elephants ran away for a great distance in the most cowardly manner.

We now altered tactics: seeing that the tigers came always at the centre of the line, Lyall and I took our howdah-elephants in the centre and arranged the beating-elephants on each side, and in this formation we advanced to the third attack. The tigers behaved exactly as before; but we both managed to fire at them as they came towards us. "Nayuntara" was round in an instant and in full speedy retreat; but the tiger singled her out and gave chase. I managed to steady myself in the howdah with my face to the tail, and in this way got an easy shot just as the tiger was rising

to strike the elephant behind, and I put in a mortal bullet. I saw the tiger roll over and over, and though we were all running off at the tip-top speed elephants could get up, I gave a cheer to Lyall, and shouted out that one of the tigers was done for. The whole body of elephants fled far into the plain.

Not only had the elephant "Nayuntara" misbehaved greatly, but it seemed to me that her mahout too had lost his courage, and did not really exert himself to keep his elephant steady. A cowardly mahout makes a cowardly elephant; so I resolved to put the howdah on my well-trained favourite "Lucky," and I knew no pluckier mahout than Sowdaugor existed. This arrangement having been carried out, we again entered the jungle in the same order as on the last beat: that is, Lyall and I went side by side in the centre of the line. Before we reached the middle of the patch of jungle we came upon the body of the dead tiger. This rather discomposed the already nervous elephants; but we went on, and when we came across the other tiger my elephant at any rate was steady, and we wounded him, and were not routed out of the jungle this time. Then we formed line and beat back; the jungle was now considerably beaten and trodden down and we could see better; so when next the tiger was roused up and began to show fight we were able to get a better view of him, and he was soon rolled over, dead.

This had been a most exciting scrimmage, and great was the hubbub and talking that went on before both these tigers were hoisted on to the guddies. There were more patches of jungle to be beaten, and in one of these we turned up a fine and savage tiger. He came slap at me open-mouthed; but Sowdaugor held "Lucky" firmly, and my very first shot, at about twenty paces off, struck the tiger on the nose, and, passing backwards, shattered the lower jaw, and rendered him powerless as regarded biting propensities. Thus we had little difficulty in adding him to our score of slain.

This was decidedly the finest day's sport I ever had on the churs, and after it, although Lyall and I went on and killed more tigers, I will not inflict on you any more tales of tiger-shooting from the howdah. I believe that these tigers had long lived in this little island. If it had not been submerged in the usual rising of the Brahmapootra river in the preceding July and August they may have been on the island for more than a year, or they might have just occupied these jungles five months before I found them. There was nothing whatever for them to feed on on the island but tame cattle. We did not find one deer, hog, or even hare or large bird upon it; yet we had killed three full-grown tigers and wounded a fourth, and found three cubs. The island was not a mile and a half long nor very broad; the destruction these animals carried on among the herds of cattle must have been most serious. I consider that these tigers had never been interfered with, and that they had no fear of man; and that tigers found in places where they have been long allowed to prey on animals without being attacked

and disturbed are much more ready to fight than those which have been often harrassed by shooting-parties, or driven off by native shikarries and frightened and prevented from establishing a home or den. That they thought themselves secure is also confirmed by the fact that they chose the island as a breeding-place.

In memory of this day's fine sport I prepared the head of the last tiger, and afterwards took it to Ward, the taxidermist, in Vigo Street, who stuffed it and put it into a glass case, where the open mouth is filled with an enormous red tongue, and the whole head made to look bigger than it did when I first saw his green glaring eyes and his real tongue.

A few years afterwards I visited Kewah chur, and learned that immediately after our departure the whole of the jhow-jungle had been cut down, and no tiger had been seen or heard of on the island again.

Letter No. 39.

The Jungles of Eastern Bengal not suited for sport on foot, and Elephants generally used.—Ameers of Scinde shot Tigers from cages.—Shooting from "machāns" not common except by native shikarries: is poor sport at best.—Tigers occasionally killed on foot. Objections to trying to kill Tigers single-handed on foot. Difficult for one man to kill with certainty a Tiger coming straight at him. Even a well-placed ball may not be instantaneously effective. Very different if several sportsmen stand by each other. Death of a friend who went up to a wounded Tiger on foot.—Death of a Tiger at Comilla head station.—Tigers in inundations.—Tiger killed by a French gentleman.

The climate of the hills on the frontiers of Eastern Bengal is very moist, the trees of their forests are green all the year round, and much of the thick and thorny undergrowth is too damp to be burnt. Hence you can never see for any long distance under the trees. The plains for the most part are formed of alluvial soil, producing, when left uncultivated, crops of thick grass in which a man can only walk with difficulty, and where he cannot see a yard in front. Beating such jungles as these, either on hill or plain, with bodies of men, for animals like tigers or buffaloes, which cannot be perceived till almost within reach, is impracticable, and has not been attempted to any extent; and tiger-shooting, except in the case of watching from trees or prepared platforms for the chance of a tiger revisiting the carcase of an animal which he has killed, or of his coming to drink at particular spots where water is scarce, is generally carried on by Europeans from elephants: still tigers are occasionally shot by men and parties on foot where elephants are unprocurable, and no other way of getting at the animal can be found. When the Ameers of Scinde were kept under surveillance in the neighbour-

hood of Calcutta, in the early days of Lord Dalhousie's reign, these noblemen, who were sporting characters in their way, and came out with the Calcutta fox-hounds, had iron cages made. These cages were carried to certain places in the Barasett Soonderbunds, where tigers were numerous and had killed animals put for baits. An Ameer would then enter a cage and have himself fastened in, and remain in the cage all the moonlight night. In this way the Ameers killed several tigers, they told me. I, however, never knew that any European gentlemen had resorted to this kind of sport. It would not have suited me; I should have died of Soonderbund fever.

Waiting for a shot at a tiger, when he should come to have another meal off an animal which he had killed, from branches of trees or "machāns," was a kind of sport I very soon abandoned after trial. I was bitten by ants and stung by mosquitoes, and when on one occasion the attendant muttered to me to look out as the tiger was coming, the beast either heard his voice, or perhaps heard my movement on the branch as I tried to get into a position to shoot should the tiger show himself at the expected spot. I never saw the tiger, and I never got a shot on this or any other similar occasion. Tigers are killed in this manner by the native shikarries for the Government reward, and for the backsheesh which they receive from zemindars and cattle-owners in the neighbourhood, and for the profit they make from selling the whiskers, claws, and tiger-fat. If you think you would like this kind of sport, for a good douceur a native shikarry doubtless will give you a chance of a shot; you will be much more likely to catch a fever. From what I have heard, most tigers shot from trees in the dusk are wounded, and the bodies often not recovered for some days. When you have hit a tiger, and he has crawled out of sight, you do not know that he is dead; and if you are to wait on your branch till daylight and attendants come to you, you will have to pass a most disagreeable time of it.

I have, however, gone out tiger-shooting on foot at times, and must not omit to notice the subject. I consider it little short of madness for a sportsman to offer, when alone by himself, to receive the attack of a tiger on foot. Let a man be ever such a good shot and able to put his bullet where he pleases—let his nerve be such that he can stand like a machine and not feel pulsation increase when he sees a large tiger come bounding towards him and with no possible chance of avoiding his heavy blows but by the delivery of a shot which shall not only be fatal, but which must instantly deprive the animal of power of motion and ability for mischief—I call it madness to expose himself to such a risk. The best shots occasionally shoot more or less wide of their exact marks: many a well-delivered bullet has glanced or gone round instead of straight through the body; a ball striking the hard bone of the skull may deviate and miss the brain, and many a mortal wound may not instantaneously deprive an animal of power. A tiger may go on

for fifty or even a hundred yards with a ball in his heart, and strike many a murderous blow with his mighty paws before he actually expires. A ball behind the ear, passing through the back of the head, or a bullet in the vertebræ of the neck, may render a tiger instantly powerless; but bullets cannot be placed behind the ear when a tiger is coming straight at you. Therefore I say if you go shooting tigers on foot secure some place where you can avoid his rush, or obtain the companionship of some two or three other armed sportsmen at your side; also, if the tiger is advancing to your place of ambush, say behind a tree or thick bush, let him pass before you deliver your shot, or you may, by firing at him when he does not offer a sufficiently fatal opportunity for a deadly wound, bring his attack at once on to you. Wounded tigers will generally attack anything immediately in their line of advance, especially if they think they have received the injury from anything in front, whereas they will seldom turn back after they have passed the place from which they have been shot. Besides, a tiger passing offers you the choice of the most fatal spots to fire at—the ear, the side of the head, the neck, and the heart. You can make sure of no really fatal spot when a tiger is coming at you if you are on foot: a shot in the nose is constantly far from fatal, and may pass downward between the jaws and into the side of the neck; a ball between the eyes may run along the bone of the skull outside. I have known a bullet down the throat fail to stop a tiger. It is impossible to say that a single well-planted ball delivered at a tiger coming straight at you at thirty yards distance or less must necessarily prevent him reaching you and giving you your death-blow; and the fact that you and others may have delivered once, or more than once, an instantaneously fatal shot at a tiger charging straight down on you is no proof that you will be always able to repeat the feat. It is an entirely different matter if three or four men with double-barrels in their hands pour a volley into an attacking tiger, the shower of balls will most probably knock him completely over, and a second volley can be then discharged into his prostrate body; and a tiger generally hesitates to attack a number of resolutely opposing men, whereas he will go willingly at one single individual. If a tiger does get hold of you, even though he be wounded and all but dead, the chances of your surviving the injuries are terribly against you. I have read of several European gentlemen who have been siezed by wounded tigers and who died in consequence. I have known men who have lost their limbs; I myself all but lost my arm from the attack of a leopard; and my poor friend, the collector mentioned in the hog-hunting letters as accompanying me to the island of Siddhee, was afterwards killed by a tiger when he was a judge. I have referred to this accident more than once, so I suppose I may give brief particulars.

This gentleman, who had always been an ardent and persevering sportsman and as keen with spear or smooth-bore or in the howdah as myself, would never keep elephants of his own; he trusted to scratch elephants obtained from

zemindars and natives, and with such animals he was shooting in the country between Dinagepore and Maldah, accompanied by the joint magistrate of his district. They wounded a tiger late in the day, and the tiger, though very severely wounded, gained the shelter of some high thick grass into which the cowardly inferior elephants could not be induced to enter. All efforts to get at the beast having failed he was left; and next day my friend went again to the grass, and again these elephants could not be driven or taken into it. The judge then thought the tiger must be dead, and he fired into the place where he thought he was and nothing stirred; so the two gentlemen got off their elephants and, instead of going shoulder to shoulder most carefully with cocked guns, they separated, and the judge with his unloaded gun went into the grass and instantly came upon the tiger, wounded but not dead: the tiger seized him and was inflicting terrible injuries when the joint magistrate came to the rescue and shot the tiger stone dead with a single ball. The judge shortly after died of the wounds. I need not enlarge on the accident, as you read the tale you may judge for yourself.

In early days, when I had no elephants of my own, about 9 A.M. news was brought that there was a tiger in the station of Comilla, close to our public offices; I was the only sporting officer at headquarters at the time. I hurried to the bank of the Goomtee, the river which runs through Tippera and by the Comilla bazaar; by the time I got to the station embankment I found every half-caste clerk and petty officer who could hold a gun at the spot, with every species of weapon from an old horse-pistol to a four-ounce rifle, which last weapon was held by a Frenchman. We found the marks of a small tiger in the mud on the bank, and some said it was only a leopard. We followed the marks up to some thick thorn bushes: after some time I put my head into one of these to look if any animal could be seen; instantly there were several grunts, which I thought came from a hog. I was asking the people not to shoot a hog if it should bolt, when out went a tiger; it bounded up to the embankment, and on leaping down the other side struck an old woman on the creel or basket of fish which she had on her back, and knocked the old lady into the water, where she screamed loudly, but no damage had been done. The tiger was now in some low scrubby thorny bushes about two feet high, and close to the houses and offices: presently, for some reason or other, he walked out; I did not see him, but some twenty persons did; a tremendous volley was fired, and the firing went on for a minute or two, and this fair-sized hill tiger was disposed of. I was the wrong side for the fun and saw none of it.

Tigers in the high inundations get washed out of their usually dry lurking-places and go swimming for long distances, and occasionally take refuge in most unlikely places, even in towns and factories. I have known them go into the town of Chittagong and into the suburbs of Dacca. I remember, when I was at Rajshahye, one swam to a low patch of grass near a factory

superintended by a gallant old Frenchman named Deveria ; he was told of the tiger and went and took a look at it crouching in the grass. He returned to his factory, cleaned his one single-barrelled rifle, fitted a bullet to it after much trimming with a penknife, and sallied forth against the tiger, and was going to shoot it from some distance ; but he thought, as he had only once chance, he had better go closer, so he walked up to about fifteen yards : the tiger never moved; he shot him through the head and the tiger lay dying. This gentleman had served under Napoleon the Great and was a remarkably daring and cool man; he was equally cool, or foolhardy, with a dangerous snake, as I will tell you when I come to letters on snakes.

Letter No. 40.

Sport at Cuttack.—Sportsmen scarce in Orissa; but a good sporting country, which requires much looking up, and would require much pains and trouble.—A hänk at Cuttack. Want of good preparations. First day on platforms. Second day rouse a tigress unexpectedly: kill her on foot. Behaviour of Europeans and natives.—Tigers on trees in inundations.

I once had an exciting brush with a tiger in Cuttack. Cuttack is not in Eastern Bengal, but it is under the rule of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and as a Bengal civilian you might be appointed to a station in that province. I was only there for three months; I found no experienced sportsmen at Cuttack, no man who had ever seen a tiger, and no one who could give me proper sporting information.

There were plenty of elephants procurable, but not one howdah in the city. But Orissa must be a grand province for shikar. A very large portion of the country is uncultivated and covered with forest; the dry rocky hills are full of bears ; gour or bison in moderate numbers are to be found. Spotted deer roam about in large herds ; the sambhur bucks carry antlers to which no horns of Eastern Bengal can approach. Tigers are not scarce. The Chilka Lake is one of the best places for ducks and waterfowl known in India ; in the plains surrounding it plenty of antelopes are to be got, and in the low-lying jungles nearer the western shores of the Bay of Bengal herds of wild buffaloes and sounders of hogs used to afford the best of exciting sport. The Indian sporting magazines for 1840 to 1850 have numerous articles describing sport in Orissa. The judge of Rajshahye, my old before-mentioned friend, used to tell me thrilling stories of his adventures on foot with a celebrated Cuttack sportsman (Dr. Chapman, I think), and the hairbreadth escapes they had experienced when shooting wild animals among the ant-hills. Hog-hunting

used to flourish in Orissa. Tumlook and its salt lands are not far off; and, with a long ride and a night in a palkee, one might join members of a hog-hunting club belonging to Madras who sometimes come to meets not so very far from Cuttack. Had it been my luck to have been employed for twenty years in the Cuttack districts, I think I should have found plenty of sport, and have had perhaps as much fun and excitement as in Eastern Bengal.

But, from my experience as an Indian sportsman, I should say that really good sport in Orissa could only be obtained by a person who either knew the country and the places and times at which to work, or was able to take advantage of the knowledge of others. It is no use to wander about in trackless forests like the Khoond mehals or tributary states; game does not congregate in the interior of such extensive tree-jungles. The deer and the hogs seek out the places near cultivation where they can obtain food; the tiger follows the deer or herds of cattle; gour require good feeding-ground and water; and bears like shelter from the summer sun. Of sport in dry and rocky India I know little; but I saw enough of Cuttack to know that if I had been forced to work it for sport, I should have required to keep in my employ not one, but at least four shikarries, and that without long study of the country and its peculiarities—the cultivated and non-cultivated areas, the rivers, marshes, and hills—I should probably have experienced more failure than success; I should have had to train up several Budderuddeens, to make intimate friends with at least a score of half-independent petty rajahs, and to have mastered a colloquial language of which I had never even been taught the rudiments.

As it was, during my short experience of the district I had excellent sport, and shot tiger, and leopards, and game that I never met before—four-horned antelope, the memimna or mouse-deer, and spurfowl. Before I left I managed to have a shooting-party got up in the only style the residents seemed to be master of. This was half a picnic party and half a "hānk." To me it was most interesting. I had never seen a hānk, nor shot in dry forests with open glades where you could see under the trees for hundreds of yards. I hoped to have seen a gour (called here bison), and expected a grand day at bears; as it was, we saw no bears and no bison, but we did bag a tiger, which none of the party anticipated.

The hānk came off on the 12th and 13th of March in the forests or tree-jungles of Gobindpore in Ducknāl. Four English gentlemen accompanied me; I was a sort of guest, though the party had been got up at my instance. The commissariat arrangements were excellent, and we were all most comfortable. The Rajah had arranged for the beating, and supplied a small army of some two hundred and fifty to three hundred Ooriahs as beaters. He accompanied us in a sort of open sedan affair, carried by palkee-bearers. I should say the Rajah had no more idea how to conduct a really proper drive

in such forests as these than a radical spouter at Trafalgar Square; but he did his best.

He had arranged for several beats, and at fixed distances leafy platforms had been made in trees; to these we mounted by bamboo ladders, and here we were requested to stay till the hānk was over. No notice was taken of the wind, or of the direction in which the various kinds of jungle were laid out; no one knew any thing of the runs or habits of any animals in these jungles, nor where they would be likely to make for. All was left to luck.

After about an hour and a half, shots here and there were heard; occasionally something was seen moving: possibly that something might come your way. Generally, so far as I could make out, most animals broke back. Herds of spotted deer were reported to have avoided our platforms; no animals of any kind had been actually marked into any particular haunts; but, of course, there were the jungles, and game ought to be in them, and sensible animals would naturally come walking up to the platforms, but they did not, or very few did. I got a sambhur the first day, and considered it great luck; another sambhur and some four-horned antelopes were also bagged. We had two beats, partaking of a nice tiffin between them, and it was a most enjoyable outing, to say the least of it. Then came the walk to the tents, and dinner and whist, and a very pleasant evening.

Next day the same sort of plan was followed, but I preferred to remain on the ground. Armstrong shot a leopard; there were a number of distant shots; I killed a four-horned antelope, and saw some spotted deer break back. Just as the hānk was over there was a tremendous excitement, and an awful shouting and hubbub, and it appeared that the beaters had disturbed a tiger which had gone forward into some bush-jungle. The beaters all went running to their Rajah, and the English gentlemen came together to find out what the rumpus was about. Armstrong said at once, "Let us put ourselves under Simson's orders, and do what we can." I had only one order to give, and that was that we should all advance together, and keep together, and separate on no account. I said, "If we keep together we shall do well; the tiger might come out at us from any bush, but we ought to be able to manage him." So we went to the place—three gentlemen (Armstrong, Levinge, and Webster), a Seikh orderly of Armstrong's (who also carried a double-barrelled gun), and myself. At a respectful distance behind came the Rajah in his tonjon and surrounded by his army. Hardly had we got near the bushes when out rushed the tiger, and came within thirty or forty yards of us. When he saw a lot of us together he hesitated and half turned; at that instant four barrels were fired, four bullets struck him, each in most vital spots. The tiger fell so dead and motionless that he lay with his left paw in the air; so completely was he paralyzed and finished that the paw remained in that position till we put it down. We five had stood still, but it was very different with those behind; at the first sight of the tiger the Rajah's gallant army bolted to a

man; the Rajah was knocked over with his tonjon on the top of him, and was just extricating himself from his difficulties when we looked round at the ludicrous sight.

I said four barrels were discharged: we stood with the other barrels ready for another volley, but it was not needed. There should have been five shots discharged; what was the fifth gun about? He, with extra precaution, had, when starting, put the stops into the dogheads of his rifle, and when the trigger was pulled the weapon would not go off. Where would our friend have been had he been alone and single-handed when the tiger charged? I always objected to these stops, and my rifles were made without them.

When we went to the dead tiger, each man could, in a moment, point out his particular wound—Armstrong's was near the heart, two were not far from the same place, mine (where I always try to put my ball) behind the ear. The whole thing was most successful, and a fair proof, if any proof be required, of the advantages of two or three persons keeping close together when tiger-shooting on foot, and also of the danger which might easily be incurred if any thing went wrong with a single individual unsupported by others.

Tigers, as a rule, do not climb up trees, as leopards often do; there is no reason why they should not, and tigers have been several times shot on trees in the district of Purneah. I have seen these trees; they are situated in the moist undulating plains which are always inundated when the Ganges rises to its greatest height. These wide and desolate pergunnahs contain a certain amount of game which, when the grass is high and unburnt, may be said to be in safety, but when the inundation is really high it is only the few highest spots which are uncovered with water. To these every species of living thing resorts that has not already provided against death by drowning. In Southern Sylhet the appearance of these watery plains when the water is unusually deep must be about the nearest resemblance to the scriptural deluge conceivable. I have sailed across these places when the human inhabitants only existed on artificial mounds crowded with huts, filled to overflowing with human beings huddled together for the short time, waiting for a fall of twelve or eighteen inches in the flood. To each hut you would see a canoe or two fastened. In some places on the top of similar mounds a few trees would be seen, their bases standing in the water and their branches waving over it; these branches were covered with an extraordinary collection of living creatures—snakes and lizards on every branch, rats and animals of the cat tribe, squirrels and wading or short-winged birds, curious unknown insects, turtles and crab-like creatures unknown to me. As the boat came near, the snakes and the rats would leave the trees and come swimming towards it. We used generally to be going too fast, and the animals were left in our wake, but we had to kill many snakes and rats if they were likely to come up to the boats. At such times tigers used to live for the ten days or fortnight

on trees; and at Purneah, when their doings were reported, they used to be shot on the branches. These beasts fed apparently on turtles and young crocodiles, on fish and on animals which came to the mounds for refuge, and on carcases of drowned creatures which came floating by. Tigers can swim well, and I dare say they used to swim from these trees and return to them. I never saw any thing of this myself, but I know the country and more than one gentleman who shot tigers on these trees.

Letter No. 41.—*BUFFALOES.*

The Bengal Buffalo. Savage and hard to kill; vital spots where he may be wounded.—Buffalo-shooting from horseback.—Difficult to find good riding-ground.—Riding Buffaloes near Sreemoodee.—The planter.—Shooting from the herd. Solitary male Buffalo: killing him no easy work.—The Buffalo near Bullumāra. Man killed. Battle with the Urna.—A savage Buffalo knocks over horse and rider and kills the horse.

There must be few sportsmen in Eastern Bengal who have shot tigers and ridden hogs who have not come across wild buffaloes. The male or bull is often called "urna" or "arnee." Of all the wild animals I have killed I know of none that at times can be more desperately savage, more difficult to kill on foot or on horseback, or which requires such heavy metal to bring it down. All other animals may be instantaneously killed by a ball entering about the base of the ear and passing either into the vertebræ or through the back of the skull and brain. It is, however, almost impossible to hit a buffalo in this vital spot. When the animal goes plunging and blundering along, at a pace which, though not decidedly fast, is far from slow, and which no other animals can come up to when the ground is deep marsh or mud, or when way has to be made through high thick grass or brushwood or any jungle whatever, he always puts his nose in the air, and his huge horns then lie backwards and protect the whole of his neck and the particular spot at which, in all other kinds of large game, I love most to aim. Hence he must be wounded, most commonly, about the shoulder and heart. His hide is exceedingly tough. Any ball about an ounce weight, made only of lead and discharged from a weak gun, will, if fired from a long distance, only just pierce the skin. The hide of a rhinoceros is hardly tougher when the animal is alive. When a buffalo charges (and no animal that I know charges so furiously and determinately) it is exceedingly difficult to knock him over with a single ball. I used invariably to shoot buffaloes with the heaviest bullets I had, and, except at very close quarters or when on horseback, I considered it butchery to fire out of ordinary smooth-bores.

There is, however, one remarkably tender place where I have several times

planted fatal balls, and that is under the tail. The skin is soft here, and a well-fitting ball discharged from a gun loaded with plenty of good powder will often pass through the intestines all the way from the tail to the lungs or the heart; in fact, I look on this shot as one that will often prove fatal, though, of course, it is not to be relied on. Once bring the urna to the ground and let me get behind him, I can put him out of his pain in an instant by planting a ball where Byron says the Matador plunges his dagger—

> "Where his vast neck first mingles with the spine,
> Sheathed in his form the deadly weapon lies."

This spot cannot be reached while the animal is on his legs; but if you know the exact place and fire into it from an elephant or on foot, the huge beast stretches his four legs out stiffly, and expires with a quiver.

Buffalo-shooting from the howdah is comparatively tame amusement, but riding a buffalo with a gun, when the ground will admit of it, is grand fun; and shooting fierce buffaloes on foot is a sport that will put all a sportsman's nerve and skill to the test.

The first time I saw wild buffaloes I was out hog-hunting with the Tent Club in the Barasett subdivision. We heard of them, and went after them. What we were to do heaven only knows. There were some guns, I believe, on the elephants. Most of us had only spears, which, as far as buffaloes were concerned, might as well have been toothpicks. However, all we saw was a number of huge black backs plunging through tall grass-jungle, much like great porpoises at sea; they crossed a tidal nullah and went to the Soonderbund jungles.

The next time I went to enjoy this sport was in company with Dr. Young of Berhampore. It was at a hog-hunting meet where buffaloes were occasionally to be found in riding-ground. The doctor was a professor of buffalo-shooting from horseback, and I learnt the theory from him; but we were able to find no buffaloes in practicable ground. Dr. Young had both gun and pistols, and considered the last effective. So I bought a pair of double-barrelled pistols carrying balls No. 16. In after-practice I found these useless. Enough powder was put in the weapons to cause a nasty jar to the wrist, but the bullets sometimes just penetrated the hide, and sometimes they stuck in it. So great was the difficulty of getting buffaloes away from dense jungles and in open hard plains, that for a time I gave up thinking of the sport.

There was, however, a planter at Sreemoodee in Tippera who used to ride and kill numbers. This was the gentleman who used to hunt hogs at Doudcandee and Noakholly with me, and one of those who in after years shot with me at Tikree. By a planter you must not understand me to restrict the meaning to an indigo-planter—the planters I so often refer to were, I think, all at times engaged in indigo concerns; but I extend the term so as to apply to all European gentlemen employed in silk manufacture, tea-gardens, or the management

of landed property in the interior of Eastern Bengal. This planter, Mr. D., lived at the time I am now writing of at a factory on the borders of the Dacca and Tippera districts. It was an extraordinary sight to see him when first he started forth to hunt buffaloes, of which news had been brought that they were in good riding-country. He took three double-barrelled loaded guns (breech-loaders were then unknown in India), one gun under each leg. Two attendants followed behind. When he came in sight of the herd he schemed to get as near as possible, and then rode at it. As he fired the first two guns he dropped them, and the attendants picked them up. He carried on the real fight with the remaining weapon.

Buffaloes are not very shy. Our method was to approach as near as we could, keeping, if possible, between the herd and any non-riding country they might be likely to make for. We first selected the chosen animal, and gave him as heavy a fire as we could; we then gave chase. If the animal attacked happened to be a female, she would probably stick to the herd as long as she could and would not fight till separated and hard pressed. A bull would often do the same, but would come more readily to the charge. The man whose turn it was to fire would endeavour to get as close as possible before firing into the animal from his right side, holding the gun with the right hand, and without putting it to the shoulder. Very often the discharge might be delivered at about five yards distance if the riding-ground was good; on such ground a good horse can gallop round a buffalo. If the buffalo came at you, there was nothing for it but to flee away at best speed; generally the buffalo would then turn and follow the herd. Presently the wounds would tell, and the injured animal would fail to keep pace with the herd, and then, after a few shots, would succumb, stagger, and fall.

This was the ordinary occurrence when riding at buffaloes in the herd, but the killing of a solitary male or urna was quite a different matter. Such an animal would probably be desperately savage, and would not only charge the horseman, but would follow and stick to him for any distance, as long as there seemed any chance of getting near him. If the sportsman got away, reloaded, and again advanced to the attack, the urna probably would go at him the moment he came near. This made the killing of the buffalo a very prolonged and difficult business. Loading a gun with ball on horseback is not so very easy, and not a little judgment and horsemanship are required for the management of a horse in a buffalo-ride. The toughness of the animal's hide and the length of his horns increase the difficulties. One friend of mine used to fire at the hock; he considered that if he could fracture the hock half the battle was finished. I never had but one companion at a time in my buffalo-ridings; perhaps if I could have got half a dozen other men to ride and shoot, we might have made shorter work of it.

One day I was hog-hunting at Bullumāra on the Noakholly churs with an officer in the Government Salt Department. He was a real good shikarry, a

first-rate pig-sticker, and a good shot. In the morning, before we started, a number of natives had asked us to go and kill a tremendous male buffalo which they stated was doing great mischief and interfering with their pursuits; but the Salt Superintendent and I had both been so often misled in this manner, having generally found that the buffaloes were in ground where riding was impracticable, that we preferred to go hog-hunting. On our return from our favourite sport, which had yielded us four good hogs, as we neared the salt bungalow we saw a crowd of people. The body of a man who had been killed by this buffalo had been placed across the threshold, and the relatives and villagers had brought the corpse to see if that would induce us to attempt to kill the buffalo. We could not refuse, so we started about noon.

As we neared the place where the urna was reported to be, and which we were much pleased to find was in open and cultivated country, the homesteads and villages seemed deserted and barricaded, doors and windows fastened, and no inhabitants to be seen save a few on the cottage-roofs on the look out. At last our guides pointed to about fifty buffaloes feeding on the plain, among which was one conspicuous for his great size and his muddy appearance. This was the urna. Our guides retired. We, mounted both on Arabs, and armed with a double-barrelled smooth-bore each, went slowly towards the herd of tame buffaloes; as these moved quietly off, the urna stood looking savage and pawing the ground. When about sixty yards off I told the Superintendent that I should fire. So I opened action: the ball struck on the fore leg high up, and instantaneously the huge brute came at me. I fired the other barrel and fled, dodging round the houses and homesteads. The Superintendent then managed to attract his attention and I found time to load. As soon as I was loaded I came to the front, and found the Superintendent going best pace, with the urna furiously following; so I went up and fired. The buffalo instantly left the Superintendent and came at me. I ran round and away, getting the second barrel off as best I could; but the urna kept steadily at me. Then the Superintendent came and fired, and the buffalo left me and charged him. I loaded, and was ready again by the time the Superintendent had fired both barrels and was fleeing for shelter; and this sort of thing went on till we were getting tired, and the wounds began to tell on the hunted beast. At last a pariah dog joined in the fray, and the buffalo stopped and put down his head at the dog, and I managed to get a fair steady shot, and planted a ball between the eyes which luckily penetrated the skull and brought the animal down. We both then gave him some shots from short distances, and he rose no more, but gradually expired.

No sooner did the scouts on the cottage-roofs perceive that the buffalo had fallen to rise no more, than, as if by some preconcerted signal, the villagers assembled in hundreds. Each man had a hatchet, or a dao, or a knife, and in a wonderfully short space of time they cut that huge animal into pieces, each taking a piece home. There was no attempt at skinning, each took what he

could seize; and so greedy were they that it was with difficulty I could secure the head as a trophy. This urna had for several days been devastating the neighbourhood; he was so fierce that the herdsmen could not get at the tame cow buffaloes to milk them.

The reference to the head reminds me that, in consequence of the size, weight, and clumsiness of buffaloes' skulls, I never took any of the many fine sets of horns I possessed away from the districts in which they were killed. The horns of the buffaloes I killed near Assam and in Mymensing were thinner than those of Backergunge. The buffaloes of Maldah and Purneah had more massive and shorter horns than those of Assam. The tongue and marrow of a buffalo were the only parts we ever ate.

A young planter, connected with the same concern as D. was, had his horse killed, and might easily have lost his own life, in his attempt to ride a solitary urna without assistance. He wounded the animal, which chased him and got him into some high grass; there the horse was in difficulties, and the buffalo, as it were, at home. My friend found he could not get away; the buffalo caught him up, and sent the horse and rider flying into the grass: the man lay still as a mouse, the horse got up; the buffalo pursued the horse, knocked him down, gored him, trampled on him, and eventually tore his inside out, and went off with the horse's entrails wrapped round his horns. My friend lay still till the urna disappeared; he then crept out of the grass-jungle, feeling glad to be safe. Poor fellow! he did not live long, for shortly afterwards he went on shore on Saugor Island to look for sport, and was shot by a gun-trap set for tigers, as I related in an earlier letter.

Letter No. 42.

Ride after a Buffalo at Sabhar.—Unlucky ride after a Buffalo in Purneah; narrow escape. The Buffalo gets off.—Shooting from howdahs.—Tame and wild Buffaloes.—Buffalo-shooting on foot: in some ways very dangerous.

The last buffalo I killed off horseback was one of a herd of about six animals, one bull and five cows, which we had often seen when hog-hunting not far from Thanna Sabhar, on the Bunsee river, in the Dacca district. When hogs were plentiful we declined to pursue buffaloes, though often asked to do so; but one day no hog turned up round that favourite bheel, where I used to obtain such a variety of game. The buffaloes, however, were that day in the bheel, and took away to the westward instead of going the usual direction towards the Bhowal forest. I thought I would ride the bull, so I changed the spear for the double-barrel and galloped after the herd

accompanied by a young planter who carried neither spear nor gun. After a good run on excellent hard ground I separated the bull from the others, and gave him two well-planted bullets, when, to my disgust, I found that I had forgot my powder-flask. I requested the young planter to ride behind the buffaloes and, if possible, keep them in sight, and I went back towards the elephants. Luckily the want had been discovered, and Budderuddeen was coming on the fastest elephant with the flask. I loaded, and in about two miles or so came up with the planter, and he showed me the herd rolling along at a good distance. I went on with the chase, and just as I was getting on terms with them again I saw them all plunge into an extensive piece of water, the bed of an old stream of the Ganges; and as this was more than a hundred yards wide, I thought I had lost my game. As I reached the water I came on a wide embankment, the existence of which was not known to me; it was not in my map, but had been made to keep the water back and supply the neighbourhood in the dry season with water and fish. Doubtless it was this water which induced the buffaloes to come so far away from the Bhowal jungles. I shouted, and the herd swam across and went away on the western side. I crossed by the embankment and laid into them again; but it was at once apparent that the bull was done, the wounds I had given him began to tell, he could not keep up with the others, and so turned to fight. The ground now was dry rice-stubble field, and I could run round the poor beast on my horse. In a few shots I brought him down and killed him.

In all kinds of rough ground or fresh jungle, or where the ground is soft and galloping for a horse in any way difficult, a rider cannot approach a fighting buffalo; on hard clean riding-ground he may ride round the animal and, so to speak, play with him; but it is to be recollected that till disabled a buffalo will persevere and keep up his attack, and there may possibly be an end to the good riding-ground, and then the rider may get into difficulty.

I heard of some buffaloes in some wide flat plains in Purneah, not very far from the Coosy river; and as it was likely that hogs might also be found and floriken were sure to be seen, I went to see what I could do, and the planter, who had a howdah, managed the elephants. We found the herd in beautiful plains for riding, and if I had been accompanied by a few horsemen we might have slaughtered several. I gave up the spear and took a single-barrelled gun and set off after the herd, and endeavoured first to separate the bull from the herd. This took some time and hard work. I was riding an Arab which pulled hard on ordinary occasions, but just as I warmed to the contest the curb broke. I had very great difficulty in holding and guiding him, and so missed very many shots. The urna was a game fighter, and whenever I wounded him chased me for hundreds and hundreds of yards. I fired, I suppose, twenty shots at distances from thirty to ten yards. We passed over a great tract of country. Once he got into a tank with high banks; as I got to the top of the bank he charged right up at me, and I

expected that I should have killed him, as I fired from about ten yards distance; but he did not even fall. At last I got him on some beautiful grass ground, and he was pounding on with his head low, and bleeding from head and mouth, with tongue out, and looking very exhausted. I galloped alongside and fired from about five yards, and he staggered, but levelled his horns and charged most desperately. I fled away, he followed, and when I had galloped about two hundred yards I got to the end of the good ground. I was very tired; the horse was pulling and would not turn, or I should have galloped back; but I was also thoroughly exhausted, and went straight on. I now found myself in grass about three feet high, amongst which high white-ant hills were thickly scattered; and while I was doing quite my very best, with spurs in and both hands on the reins, to guide my horse through the ant-hills, the urna, with his heavy snort and breathing, was within ten yards of the horse's tail. I thought of poor W., and considered my hour had arrived, as I made no way from the infuriated beast, when he struck one horn against an ant-hill and turned completely over with a resounding fall. Before he was quite on his legs again I got past this patch of grass and white-ant hills and on to fair ground, and I pulled up and turned round. I never felt so completely exhausted and done up in my life; at the moment I was quite unable to load. The buffalo, after looking towards me for some minutes, lay down, and I thought he was going to die. After about ten minutes, during which I had done nothing, he got up and staggered away. I was just hesitating as to whether I would renew the attack, when the buffalo half crawled half stumbled over an embankment and found himself on the muddy shore of a branch of the Coosy. He struggled into the water and refreshed himself, and slowly ascended the opposite bank and gained the grass-jungle. I could not have followed even if I would, so I began to think about getting back. The planter had followed as well as he could with the elephants, and I was glad to see him in the distance. As the crow flies I had traversed about nine miles, and as we did not run in any direct line I must have ridden many more miles. I was truly thankful to be hoisted on to an elephant-guddy and to be refreshed with some brandy-and-soda. I was so tired, exhaused, worn out, and stiff, that I was not fit for anything for some days. I attributed this chiefly to the pulling of the horse and the difficulty of loading on such a hard-mouthed animal. I also consider that this was the nearest touch to losing my life which ever occurred to me among my many lucky escapes in the chase of wild animals, for there was no one who could have rendered any assistance; and when the head of the buffalo was close to my horse's tail among the white-ant hills in the grass, the chances must have appeared very much against me. The buffalo was an old and very tough-hided one, my bullets were light for such an old bull; I fired away nearly all I had, and the animal was bleeding from head and body, and must, I should think, have died before long.

Ordinarily buffaloes are shot from the howdah. They are careless, and no skill is required to get near them at first; when alarmed they will go straight to their points, deviating from nothing in their way, let the ground be hard or soft, marsh or deep water, heavy grass or thick tree-jungle—all come alike to the buffalo; he may go for many miles without stopping, except perhaps to sink himself in cool water, just leaving the tip of his nose out. The only difficulty is for the man in the howdah to cut off the herd or get before it, so as to be able to plant some heavy balls into the animals at the shortest possible distance.

There is no difference between the wild and the tame buffalo in appearance. Wild bulls often come to the herds of tame cows and stay with them for days; the herdsmen like this, and think it improves the breed. Tame animals occasionally get shot for wild ones, and now and then a wily ryot will try and extort money, and pretend that a wild buffalo which had been shot belonged to his herd.

Once I was out with a party: four gentlemen were shooting from howdahs; I, as was very often my custom, was riding with a spear, ready to go after any old boars which might be roused up. The party found a solitary buffalo, and after a great deal of heavy firing killed it. As they were coming to the dying animal there was a hot contention as to whom the credit of killing the bull belonged: one claimed first blood, and another first effective shot, and so on. I rode up and remarked that there was a strap round the neck, to which at some time a bell had evidently been attached. The contention ceased, and the four gentlemen had subsequently to pay Rs. 30, I think, between them. On the whole, buffalo-shooting from the howdah is tame sport, and only pursued when no better offers.

The same reasons which interfere with tiger-shooting on foot and stalking large deer in Eastern Bengal apply to the shooting of buffaloes on foot. A sportsman cannot make his way through such jungles as buffaloes frequent, nor can he see for any long distance through the perennial leafy thickets or grass-jungles. The buffalo cannot exist far from water; he delights to lie for hours in the heat of the day immersed in water or watery mud where flies cannot teaze: I think he prefers the cool water to the dense shade of thick forest of high grass; but he is to be found in these also, but never far from water, and, as a rule, the deep marsh or mud in which he feeds is as difficult for a sportsman to travel through as the grass, often fifteen feet high, or the pathless thorny forest of trees from which the leaf is never absent.

Besides it is quite as dangerous to expose yourself on foot to the attack of an infuriated buffalo, whether it be a cow with her calf or a solitary angry bull urna, as to stand before a tiger in his charge. A number of steady men together will stop a tiger; but I doubt much if three men, unless armed with weapons of very large bores, could invariably bring an old urna to the ground; his hide is much tougher than a tiger's skin, and the thick bones

of the head and the protection afforded by his long and massive horns, and the difficulty of causing a bullet to penetrate to a vital spot, all tend to add to the risk. Yet many buffaloes are regularly shot on foot and from boats, and I have often pursued them in this manner, though I never laid myself out for buffalo-shooting or cared to spend time and money in this sport.

Letter No. 43.

Buffaloes at Backergunge. Sport with the same. Knock over the big bull: he gets up unexpectedly and I get a ducking.—My friend the Deputy Collector tossed by a Buffalo into a tree and killed.—Wild Cattle at Chur Siddhee.

Buffaloes used to be very numerous in the uncultivated newly-formed churs and islands in the tideway of the Megna. They inhabit the Soonderbunds and were at one time common in Jessore and Furreedpore; there are some herds in the Bhowal forest; they are common in all the Brahmapootra churs, and at the base of the Shooshung Hills and in Assam, and there are some in Rajshahye and Purneah and in all the best sporting districts. I never shot them on foot except in Backergunge, where there were no elephants to be got, and where the country was a network of tidal streams.

There was a gentleman in the revenue department when I was stationed at Backergunge who was very fond of buffalo-shooting, and I went out with him sometimes. He had means of getting information and used to hear if any herds took up their quarters in chur jungles with which he was acquainted. These islands were small and uncultivated; towards their centres they were covered with very thick high grass and hoogla; the soil was sandy mud into which your feet sank to the ankle, and the growth of herbage was so strong and thick that a man could hardly make his way through it. There were numerous paths made by the buffaloes, and in these there were many marks of hogs and occasionally of tigers. On the borders of these islands were stretches of sandy mudbanks covered with closely-growing coarse herbage and grass about a foot high, and to these open spots the buffaloes used to come about sunset and remain all night. Our object was to find the herd out feeding and get shots at them as they passed going back to the heavy jungles; and sometimes when a herd entered an island we used to row quickly round in a fishing-canoe, and the rowers of our larger boat used to shout and try and drive the animals across a stream into the next island.

My friend had two short single-barrelled rifles of tremendous bore,

carrying spherical balls of four ounces each; what the huge conical ball weighed I am sure I do not know; but a native carried each rifle and kept close to us. I had only ordinary double-barrelled smooth-bores and a rifle. Once we had seen a herd walk quietly into a small island, and had gone round in the fishing-boat and had landed and were making our way to the place where we expected the herd to pass across, when they all came slowly out of the jungle just in front of us and without perceiving us; we stooped down and the whole herd, followed by a large bull with massive horns, slowly walked into the stream, and there they all lay down with nothing above water but their noses. We resolved to make a rush for it and to salute them as they rose out of the water. This we managed well, and we fired nearly all our battery into them; and just as they got to the opposite edge of the stream the big bull turned round and stood; I seized my friend's rifle and let the bull have it well on the shoulder, and he fell as if quite dead; no other buffalo remained. I had fired six shots at them before taking the rifle, and my companion had fired as many shots as he could, whether at the bull or at the others I did not know. We had to go back to the canoe and then we came to the spot; the bull was lying as if dead. We landed and reached him, and I put my foot on his huge broad back when he suddenly jumped up; I made one plunge into the river, dropping my gun, and struck out into deep water. However, the bull sank down again on to the bank; my friend then gave him another plug as he lay, but he was dead: except for the ducking and the wetting of my ammunition I was none the worse.

A deputy collector who had long been stationed at Mymensing, a most experienced sportsman, noted for having killed more bears in that district than any one else, and who had been at the death of hundreds of buffaloes and scores of tigers, was killed by foolishly attempting alone to shoot a solitary male buffalo on foot. He had left Mymensing and was stationed near the Soonderbunds, where he got but little in the way of sport. Word was brought to him that a buffalo was standing in a certain spot and my friend at once went for him. The position taken up by the buffalo was one which such an experienced sportsman should have known was not fit to be approached. The animal was in tree-jungle, the mud was too deep for a man to move quickly in, and the foliage was so thick that you could not see the urna till close to him. However, the deputy collector approached as close as he could and fired one shot; in an instant the beast rushed at him and tossed him like a ball into a thick tree and he clung to the branches; the bull went off. When the poor man was got down it was found that he was badly hurt about the chest. He was immediately sent by boat to Calcutta and taken to the hospital, where he lingered a short time and died. This gentleman must have been demented when he exposed himself to this risk, for he could not have been ignorant of the danger; in addition to his

exploits as a shikarry he was famous as a snake-catcher and had made valuable collections of poisonous snakes for museums and collectors, and these he used always to catch alive.

On Siddhee and Hatteah and some other islands on the Megna there used to exist a few herds of wild cattle, and possibly there may be some such animals still in those parts. These were considered to be the descendants of some domestic cattle that had survived some of the disastrous inundations I have referred to in earlier letters, or else they had been carried off by tidal waves from the mainland and landed on these islands when deserted by human beings, and had gradually become wild and multiplied.

They were numerous in Siddhee when first I visited the island for hog-hunting, and once we arranged to have a hunt after them. We shot a few and then I thought I would ride at them with a gun. Two of us accordingly went away with a herd of about twenty; I singled out a fine red bull and shouted to my companion to ride the big black-and-white bull. I dropped my animal with a single ball and then followed up the herd and found that the black-and-white bull was still with them; in less than a quarter of an hour I was alongside of him and he fell an easy victim. My friend got a spill in a nullah and broke the stock of his gun.

We anticipated having a fine Christmas dinner—oxtail soup, roast surloin of beef, and marrow toast; but we were terribly disappointed; the soup, the surloin, and the marrow were all alike uneatable, and had a strong salt oyster-like taste. This we fancied arose from the fact that there was no good fresh water on the island; that of the river and streams was salt and nasty. As the sport was tame and the flesh useless, I never went after these wild cattle again.

I have now long harped on sport with the bullet at large game, and think it best to vary the monotony with the recital of some most enjoyable days with the smooth-bores and No. 5 shot. I have plenty more to say to you about the pursuit of leopards and deer, bears and rhinoceros with ball; but in my next letter I will take you to the Tippera hills and the beautiful quick-flying jungle-cock glancing with his bright red plumage in the pleasant sun of January, and will for the present bid adieu to the rifle and the long line of beating elephants.

Letter No. 44.

Jungle-fowl.—Tippera Jungle-fowl superior to those of most districts. Excellent sport to be got. Jungles described.—The Jungle-cock.—My great fondness for this sport. I shoot on Elephants, which is novel.—Chittagong ideas as to sport: how to work it.—Use of Elephants.—Preservation.

Of all the sport to be got with smooth-bores and small shot in Eastern Bengal, there is none that gives such great satisfaction and such little labour, trouble, and disappointment as junglefowl-shooting from the howdah at the base of the Tippera hills in Christmas or New Year time. Jungle-fowl are to be found in small numbers in almost all districts from the south of Calcutta to the north of Purneah. Probably there are none in Moorshedabad, Kishnaghur, or Jessore now, and there are none in Noakholly, which, however, extends close up to the Tippera hills; but junglefowl-shooting in most districts is as different from the sport in Tippera as the bird itself is in flavour and numbers. In the Bhowal jungles, as in most parts of Bengal, a few birds are shot now and then among other kinds of game, and their flesh is rather tasteless and dry and no better than that of the ordinary bazaar moorghee; but in Tippera flocks of birds present wild continued sport for the whole long day, and the young full-grown cockerells properly roasted are of a delicious gamey flavour. But even in Tippera, Chittagong, and Mymensing the sport differs in places for no reason that I could ever ascertain. Similar hills and plains, similar crops, food, and jungles are to be found all the way from Comilla to Chittagong, and far to the south of this. In some places for miles the birds are abundant, and two guns with proper arrangement may kill from ten to twenty brace. In other places, exactly the same in appearance and character, two guns can with difficulty bag three brace. The bird is not, I believe, exactly migratory, and in many districts clings to the same spot all the year round; where it breeds there it may be found winter or summer. But in the favoured spots in Tippera it appears in great numbers about harvest time, and but few birds are left by the middle of March. Of course it may be said they are attracted from the hilly forests by the ripe rice-crop. It may be so; but why do they not appear in equal numbers in the neighbourhood of similar crops at the base of the hills which are continuations of the same range? Jungle-fowl are scattered over all Chittagong, Arracan, Burmah, Sylhet, and Cachar. I have met sportsmen from all these districts and they say they get a few jungle-fowl chiefly by sneaking up to them, but in none of these places did I ever hear that you might enjoy a long day's sport after jungle-fowl.

I worked up the whole country for jungle-fowl from Comilla to the south of Chittagong, and having ascertained where the best sport was to be found, after a year or two never revisited the country where the birds were scarce.

The best shooting-ground began about twelve miles from the head station of Tippera and extended for about twenty-five miles; then there was a break. Good ground, but not so good, was to be found about Zaroorgunge in the Chittagong district on the side nearest Tippera; but here there was only really good shooting for one day. From this country to Chittagong birds were scarce. In the interior of the Chittagong district there were some excellent jungles, but only to be found out by experience. In the rest of Tippera and in Sylhet and Cachar there were no places where good sport could be got; at least that was the result of my inquiry. At the foot of the Shooshung Hills in Mymensing the sport was nearly as good as in Tippera; but Shooshung is distant from headquarters, and the district of Mymensing is so full of game that no one except myself apparently cared to go so far for junglefowl-shooting. In general you will find few Bengal sportsmen who have enjoyed really fine junglefowl-shooting.

The bird of Eastern Bengal is *Gallus ferrugineus*—a black-breasted red gamefowl in miniature, but not so small as the little bantam seen in England. It has rather a small comb and wattles with a white ear-lobe, and is an entirely different bird from the Madras jungle-fowl (*G. sonneratii*), which has the peculiar wing with spots like yellow sealing-wax on it, and belongs to Southern India. The birds that I shot in Cuttack had red ear-lobes. Neither in Cuttack was it customary to make parties for junglefowl-shooting. A few were shot occasionally; but they were numerous, and I feel convinced that, with active truth-telling shikarries and proper inquiries, heavy bags of jungle-fowl might have been made in Orissa; but sportsmen preferred to toil up to the knees in swamps after snipe—as others had done before—to searching out detached jungles at a distance, where they might have shot all day dry-shod and enjoyed a great variety in their sport. So greatly did the Tippera sport take my fancy, that whether I was stationed in that district or at Noakholly or at Chittagong, I always got up or attended the parties at Chowdagong and Juggernathdiggy for eight years. It was a mere matter of trouble and expense. From Chittagong I drove about thirty miles along an excellent road; I then travelled all night in a palkee. From Noakholly, after a rather early dinner, I put myself in my palkee and reached the meet at the Tippera hills about daybreak. The travelling was thus always done at night and the two or three holidays were spent in the jungles.

I was introduced to the sport in 1850, and at first followed the beaten track and did as the others did; that is, we went out early in the morning on foot, and shot on foot, returning to a late breakfast, and riding back sometimes on ponies. In the afternoon generally we had another turn at it. But I soon altered all this and introduced shooting from the howdah, thus trebling the bags and halving the trouble and fatigue.

When first I joined my appointment at Tippera, no gentleman there or at Chittagong possessed a howdah or guddy; no one apparently had thought

of shooting at mere birds from elephants. For tigers or buffaloes it was of course the right thing to do; but the idea of taking out elephants for poor little jungle-fowl!! I was looked on as a madman; but after the first meet and the grand sport we got I never heard any more of parties on foot during the remainder of my time. So little did the sportsmen of Chittagong know about the game of their districts, that when I first joined an appointment there I had to march from Tippera, keeping pace with the bullock-carts which carried my furniture and baggage; and of course I shot all day, joining the party of servants, carts, and horses before nightfall. On the last morning I shot some jungle-fowl, barking-deer, a muthoora, and two hares. In the afternoon I rode into the head station, and meeting the collector, who considered himself an experienced Chittagong sportsman, he inquired if I had any sport, and I told him of my bag. He said it was impossible, for there were no hares in Chittagong—they must be young deer. I told him I had shot from boyhood and had killed four kinds of hares and five kinds of deer, and was not likely to confuse a hoofed with a toed quadruped; but he hardly believed me till he saw the hares himself! There was room, therefore, for improvement among these gentry, and I rather flatter myself that I did quicken their ideas of sport during those years. I was a lunatic for introducing howdah-shooting into the Tippera jungles, and stark staring mad for attempting to pass elephants to Duckin Shabazpore in boats; but all my great success in junglefowl-shooting and tiger-killing was owing to these two mad acts. If you intend to distinguish yourself as a shikarry you must be prepared to strike out new paths, it will not do to content yourself with merely following the beaten track.

There are three requisites for good sport in junglefowl-shooting: first, plenty of birds; second, detached jungles; third, these jungles must be free from thorns. If there are no detached jungles, none but those which begin at the end of the rice cultivation and spread over the hills in unbroken masses of forest, the birds will come out to feed in the stubbles and run into the cover at the first disturbance, and it is impossible to get properly at them. A few birds may be stalked up to and potted on the ground—very poor sport indeed. Even if the jungles be small and detached, if they are full of thorn bushes, as is very commonly the case at the foot of these hills, and even if these coverts be well stocked with game, the birds cannot be beaten out or made to fly. If elephants beat such thorny places they do it slowly; the birds run and will not rise, and human beaters cannot pass through these jungles at all. Wherever the native hillmen have cut down the virgin jungles and cultivated for a few seasons, according to the system known as "jhoom," when they abandon the clearings the jungle which springs up is invariably thorny and useless as regards junglefowl-shooting. Therefore you need never waste time in trying for sport in ground that has been jhoomed. Your attention must be confined to patches of virgin jungle which can be beaten

out by human beaters and to such peninsula-like jungles as will admit of your placing howdah elephants between the jungle nearest the plain and the hill forest, so as to admit of the birds being forced to take wing and fly over your head. They are quite certain to fly to the hills, and there is no difficulty in arranging stations for the guns if you know the jungles. But without elephants most of the best ground is useless. There are hundreds of patches of good jungle, say of about five acres each in extent, joined to the hills by strips of jungle where the bushes are seven or eight feet high. Here on your elephant you may obtain the best of shooting; but on foot the branches would be above your head, and you would not be able to fire a shot. On foot, eight or nine brace of birds made a most unusually large bag for four or five sportsmen; but on elephants, with one companion, I have often shot more than twenty-three brace, and singly I once killed twenty brace.

To enable me to obtain the best possible sport, I consulted the collectorate maps, and then with Budderuddeen shikarry, in course of time, marked the whole of the jungles between Comilla and the Fenny river in a private map, distinguishing from practical examination the really good jungles from the thorny, or from those where, from some unknown reason, birds were not numerous.

I tried also, in a very moderate fashion, to preserve—that is, to prevent the flocks from being interfered with or disturbed before the shooting-parties began. In each village, near the good ground, there were always two or three men who possessed guns or old muskets, and who used to creep up to the flocks of jungle-fowl when feeding and kill two or more at a shot. This was done for the value of the birds, which were offered for sale at Comilla. To stop this, I either paid these men a small sum to leave the game alone or arranged with them to procure beaters and musicians for us, by which means employment was given to their friends and a little money made; or sometimes I got petty police appointments for them, and in one or two instances I gave the families petty tenures in some of the culturable churs under settlement in Noakholly. Thus in one way or another we got the shooting before the flocks were broken up or driven into the hills. A flock generally consisted of about twelve or fifteen birds; in the early season young cock birds predominated.

Letter No. 45.

Charming variety of animals and birds met with in Tippera. Game birds; Pigeons; bright-plumaged birds. The Muthoora. Polyplectron.—A government road all along the best ground.—Good sport and agreeable meeting.—Musicians and hunters.—Birds easily missed.—Snipe-shooting between jungles.

One charm in this pleasant sport was the great variety of animals and birds we met with. Once we came on a dead tiger; he was about a third grown, and had died apparently the night before from starvation. We never saw a live tiger, but frequently came on tracks. Twice we killed leopards. Barking-deer (*Cervus aureus*) were always to be found; these little animals, smaller than roedeer, seldom faced the open, and were difficult to shoot in the leafy shrub-jungle. The beaters were always greatly excited about them; we generally killed one or two each day, and once I bagged four. We generally got some beautifully marked cats. I killed some hill tree-cats (*Paradoxurus*); these are not cats, but curious long-tailed animals with peculiar split nostrils, in appearance like the raccoon of picture-books, with feet very different from cats. Jerdon's 'Mammals' was not published in my Tippera days; but I believe these animals are rightly called *Paradoxurus*. There was another animal to be seen hunting about the marshy ground at the edge of the jungles every morning and evening; the natives called it sometimes the hill-otter and sometimes hill-badger, but I could see no resemblance to either otter or badger in the creature; it was not at all uncommon, but I was never able to ascertain its name, and I have never been able to identify it in any museum.

Two or more kinds of squirrels were usually shot; but among these the ground-squirrel, so common near Calcutta, was not found. There were a few hares, but not many. Hares are scarce in Tippera and Chittagong, and I never saw one in Noakholly.

Birds of all descriptions and of most brilliant plumage were more numerous in these jungles than in any part of India known to me. Hornbills, pigeons, trogons, minivets, green bulbuls, shámás, rose-finches, and several sorts of parrots were always to be seen, and from their beauty and peculiarities were almost always shot. As an ornithologist I was deeply interested in these birds. Of varieties of game birds there were muthoora (*Euplocamus Horsfieldi*, or black-breasted kalij), hill-partridges (*Arboricola atrogularis*), polyplectrons, and occasionally peafowl, though I am ashamed to say I cannot state if these belonged to *Pavo cristatus* or *Pavo muticus*, probably they were the south-eastern or Burmese form. In addition to these, in each marshy retired uncultivated nook snipe were exceedingly numerous.

I cannot pass all these birds by without a little further notice, for though

most of the first mentioned cannot be considered game birds, yet they always attracted attention and were shot at, and when bagged were greatly admired, and their plumes and feathers were often saved for ornament.

Pigeons may be considered game. The little Indian ground-dove (*Chalcophaps indicus*) is a most lovely bird of several colours, with metallic lustre, quite different from the ordinary green pigeons. This beautiful creature used to flash out of the thickest covers and fly fast and low, offering a fair but difficult shot. The feathers of this bird were most peculiar; they are attached to the skin by a diminutive quill, and come out so readily that it is most difficult to prepare a specimen for stuffing.

The largest pigeon (*Carpophaga*), or green- or bronze-backed imperial pigeon, was common. This bird is larger than a wood-pigeon; but it is very wary. I only shot a few when in India; they used to sit on the top of the highest trees, and occasionally come flying within shot. They were grand birds. The common green pigeon and two smaller beautiful kinds were always to be seen in flocks in the cold season; also small bronze doves.

A trogon (*Trogon harpactes*) was seen at each party. This beautiful bird cannot be seen without attracting attention; his plumage is crimson and brown, and in places marked like a mallard's; his breast is scarlet.

The hunting-crow (*Cissa venatoria*) is not very rare. This bird shows most lovely shades of changing green. It is often caged, but loses in captivity, and even when stuffed, much of its delicate colouring. The shámá is here, and towards evening its notes, quite equal to the nightingale's, may be heard. Few of us are ever in the jungles at night-time. This is a most highly prized cage-bird, and a class of natives obtain a livelihood by procuring grasshoppers for its food; without insect food of this kind the bird sickens and dies.

The bird-catchers of Tippera are most skilful, and will bring you almost any bird you may order alive in a certain number of days. They are adepts with bird-lime, nets, traps, and snares, and have cunning devices for getting near to birds. Neither Jerdon nor Hume personally visited these parts, and Jerdon's 'Birds of India' does not include the ornithology of the districts of Eastern Bengal east of the Megna or south of Dacca. He considered the fauna of this region to belong to Burmah. Hume's 'Stray Feathers' was not published in my day, amd my study of ornithology when in Tippera and Chittagong was carried on under difficulty, as no good book was procurable.

Of game birds other than jungle-fowl, the chief prize here is the muthoora. This is *Euplocamus Horsfieldi*, or the black-breasted kalij. The male is black, with a little white on the back, with a crest, and the parts about the eye resemble those of a pheasant. The female is brownish and bears the same proportionate colouring with reference to the male as the greyhen does to the British blackcock. These birds are nearly always in pairs, and I have generally shot them right and left. A pair or two is all that are met with in

a day's shooting in these parts. They seem rather more numerous in Chittagong. Hume says their flesh is white and inferior: I wholly differ with him, and I feel sure he never tasted a Tippera muthoora at its best.

In the opinion of several Tippera sportsmen and myself, this bird is the very best upon table of all Indian game; it beats the floriken, and surpasses the Scotch grouse, and, to the best of my recollection, the flesh was both light and dark. But it is remarkable that the flavour of a Tippera hill cockerell in January is very greatly superior to that of a jungle-cock of the Bhowal jungles north of Dacca, and probably the muthoora varies in its flavour with localities and seasons. The tail of the muthoora is peculiar; it has no resemblance to that of a jungle-fowl or a pheasant; the two centre feathers are exceedingly broad and stiff.

The bamboo-partridge (*Arboricola atrogularis*) is often seen and very seldom bagged: in all my experience I only shot one; I have seen a few shot and the bird-catchers would get as many as were ordered. It darts unexpectedly out of thick tree-jungle, and flies with the utmost rapidity to the hill-forest close by and runs off; a man who can shoot one out of four of these birds is a far better shot than any one I ever met.

The polyplectron, a remarkable game bird with several spurs on its legs, and spotted all over with peacock-like small spots, exists in these jungles, is more abundant near Chittagong, and was numerous between Cachar and Looshye-land, when I accompanied the troops in an expedition to avenge the murder of Cachar garden tea coolies; but I never bagged more than two of these birds. Occasionally I saw them, generally a mere glimpse, as they ran through the bushes; but the bird-catchers could get them. They are wary and very difficult to put on wing.

Peafowl are scarce in Tippera and Chittagong, and by no means so common as in most districts of Eastern Bengal. I shot a few, and I understood from Budderuddeen and shikarries that they were more plentiful in the hot weather and rains than in the cold season in the jungle-fowl country. I must now, after this long digression, hark back to junglefowl-shooting.

I had arranged to meet some Tippera friends for junglefowl-shooting in the best ground at the base of the hills in the neighbourhood of Juggernathdiggy and Chowdagong on the 5th of January. Our party consisted of the collector and the doctor of Tippera, the magistrate of Chittagong, and myself. The three others rode to the meet, which was at a bungalow belonging to the Road Department, which was very useful, as the rooms were warm and watertight. We had also tents; these were pitched on the embankment which formed the road. There was a large tank of clear water close by; these splendid tanks are to be found scattered all over the Tippera district; I have seen none so fine in other districts. This road stretches from Doudcandee through Tippera and Chittagong to Arracan in the province of Burmah. That great proconsul, Lord Dalhousie, directed that the road should be put

in order, and always kept sufficiently good for the march of troops and artillery at all seasons. To a great extent this order was attempted to be enforced; whether the bridges and arrangements for crossing all the rivers were ever completed I cannot say, but the works were being carried on in my time, and the staging bungalows were useful resting-places to a sportsman marching on this road. The hills often come to within half a mile of the road, and to one acquainted with the country good sport at various kinds of game birds could be got close to this road for hundreds of miles, and I almost venture to hope that this sport exists still; it can only be obtained in perfection by those who have opportunities of learning about the ground, and I know that most of it is seldom visited by English sportsmen who can find leisure enough to make themselves acquainted with the good as well as the inferior beats. In places duck-shooting is to be got, and snipe are exceedingly numerous; but the best marshes and pools are inside the first range of hills and not easily found out. The three gentlemen referred to arrived at the trysting-place the night before; I travelled at night by palkee from Noakholly, and woke up the sleepers at 8 A.M. with the sound of the horn.

The morning was foggy, and the thick moist vapour did not clear off sufficiently to admit of sport till near 10 A.M. Then followed a bright cloudless day, with no heat that could be complained of—as glorious weather as Italy could show. We had four howdahs and six elephants; elephants are of little use as beaters here, but invaluable for the howdah, from which you can command all the best shooting. We assemble close to the jungle to be first beaten, and present a very miscellaneous appearance: there is the band of musicians—some dozen individuals whose trade it is to play discordant music at nautches, births, and marriages, on instruments consisting of drums, flutes, and wind instruments to which I cannot give names; but when all these are in full force together they make the hearts of the poor jungle-fowl tremble. These musicians are not much use as actual beaters, but with the aid and persuasion of chuprassies and the mahouts on the two spare elephants, they are led somehow into the middle of the jungle, and when the firing begins, they all play up as loud as they can, and this prevents game from running back. I look on these tuneful gentry as very useful in this sport. Next there are about fifty able-bodied men, each armed with a good stick; these should be men accustomed to hill-work, and able and willing to force their way through thickets and light thorny jungle. They are under the command of two Sirdars, and have been got together by my orders sent some days before; they come as much for pay as sport, and I have to address them, and insist on making them understand that those who do not do full work cannot receive full pay.

The first jungle to be stirred is, Budderuddeen says, full of birds, and has deer, hares, and hogs in it also; it is shaped like a peninsula, and across the neck of the peninsula, which separates the island of jungle from the main sea of hill-forest, the howdah elephants are put in position. The so-called island

is surrounded by thick rice-stubble, and Budderuddeen marshalls the army of musicians, beaters, and the two elephants outside the furthest edge and awaits my signal. When we are all in position I blow the horn and the beating commences, and soon some jungle-fowl are seen and heard flying about in the island: the men on the elephants try to keep the beaters in line, when an old hog gets up and rushes off towards the hills; this decomposes the whole arrangement; some of the beaters rush after the hog, and some, afraid of him, leave the jungle, and I have to begin to beat again. After a time the further half of the jungle is beaten through, and a wary old cock makes an attempt to slip over in rapid flight to the hills, and the magistrate and the doctor fire four barrels at him, though quite out of range. These two gentlemen have expressed their opinion that "jungle-fowl must be, like barn-door fowls, easy to hit and hardly worth aiming at. Now, talk about snipe, they require skill!" But, somehow, the two gentlemen at the end of the day can only claim one bird between them, and they dispute as to the right to that.

No sooner are the shots heard than the musicians make a dreadful din; each Hindoo beater shouts "Ram, Ram!" and the Mahommedans cry "Allah, Allah!" and a cloud of some twenty-five bright-coloured birds, with ruddy plumage glancing in the sunshine, burst over our heads, all making to the hills. The collector and I fire as hard as we can; we have each three double-barrels loaded with No. 5 shot, my fourth gun has ball in it. We load again, and firing is warm until the island is beaten out. The excitement caused by two barking-deer is great, and at this our opening beat there is a good deal of confusion, and a considerable time also has necessarily to be consumed in picking up the fallen birds, which for the most part lie in thick scrubby bush-jungle above three feet high.

This done, we started for the next suitable piece of jungle; on the way we came on an extensive piece of marshy deep ground which had not been lately cultivated; this was full of snipe, so we got down from the howdahs and loaded with No. 8 shot, and made line and steadily beat up this ground. Here the magistrate and doctor were quite at home and made some very pretty shooting. The birds sat well as the sun was high; but they all flew to the hills, we could mark none down. We now remounted on the howdahs and arranged for the next beat. The jungle was not so nicely shaped: we had to beat parallel with the hills and to make different plans for the guns; two were sent ahead, the collector and the doctor, while the magistrate and I kept more level with the beaters and tried to make them keep line. On our elephants we could do this and shoot, but sportsmen on foot could not have shot at one bird in ten. There was considerable excitement when the doctor bagged a barking-deer with shot; it came almost within ten yards of him; he had never killed a deer before. The collector bagged a woodcock; we generally shot two or three of these birds every year. We all got plenty of difficult shots at jungle-fowl.

Letter No. 46.

Payment of beaters.—Theft of Jungle-fowl. Summary punishment of thief. The day's bag.—Pleasant evening party.—Large game must naturally remove to distant places before civilization. The hills afford safe retreat.—Jungle-fowl shot by sneaking and by crackers, and occasionally when beating for other game.

By the time this beat was finished we ordered a rest for half an hour and took some tiffin; the beaters, mahouts, and musicians smoked and ate choora and the elephants had water and feasted on bamboos. I then mustered all the beaters and gave to each man a green gun-wad; without production of this wad no beater could receive his pay at the close of the day. At times I had been cheated—men presented themselves in the morning, did no beating, absented themselves during the hard work, and appeared again to receive their pay; the wad arrangement stopped all this.

Then we went on again till nearly dark, twice getting down to shoot snipe. I had the luck to bag a brace of muthoora, right and left, and another deer and a number of beautiful-plumaged birds, some pigeons, squirrels, and curious animals were bagged.

In the course of the afternoon some birds which the collector and I shot, and which were apparently well killed, could not be found, and I soon ascertained that these were stolen. There were some huts close by, and I inquired of a boy of about ten if any one had taken any birds into the houses, and he said Mahmoud Ali had just taken one in. In a moment Budderuddeen was inside and returned triumphant with a jungle-cock in one hand and the culprit in the other; this was a clear case of theft. Two of us were magistrates, so we tried the offender on the spot, and convicted him on his confession and sentenced him to twelve strokes with a rattan. This sentence I inflicted with my own hand: Mahmoud Ali was stripped and held over the parapet of a bridge, and I laid on the strokes sharply. The collector said I reminded him of the "noble judge who carried out his own decrees." The bridge was always afterwards called the bridge of the "Huk-tuzveez," or righteous judgment. Never in succeeding years did we suffer from this kind of theft in this country.

After we reached the tents, the beaters and musicians were assembled, and those who held green wads passed, and all were paid, and the Hindoos received a tot of strong native spirits. You should always provide yourself with a supply of small coin for the payment of beaters; regular daily payment procures for you a good name, and beaters are then always to be got in sufficient numbers. Payment should be made by yourself, or the chuprassies and servants and Sirdars appropriate a large share and the beaters get cheated. The gift of a little grog too has a most cheering result.

The bag on this day, which was rather a better day than usual, was as follows:—

	Head.
Jungle-fowl, 26½ couple	53
Muthoora	2
Bamboo-partridge	1
Woodcock	1
Carpophaga, or imperial pigeon	1
Ground-doves	5
Green pigeons, some of a small kind	10
Snipe, 11 couple	22
Deer	2
Hares	4
Squirrels of different kinds	3
Paradoxurus	1
The curious animal, call it otter of dry land	1
Head	106

All the jungle-fowl except one were shot by the collector and myself. The magistrate at the end held out his empty shot-cases and said he had never fired away so much shot before; he did not approve of professional slaughter and owned that he did not kill much, but was positive that he killed the cock which the doctor claimed.

Jungle-fowl fly very fast and strongly, and when backed by a breeze are very hard to hit if a person is not accustomed to the sport. I always used 3¼ drachms of Curtis and Harvey's No. 2 diamond grain powder and 1⅛ ounce of No. 5 shot: I have known larger shot used, but it was not more effective; birds knocked over at long shots with large shot were seldom found. The scenery at the foot of these hills is charming; there is a great variety of forest trees and shrub-jungle, abundance of flowers at times, a few quick-running rivulets, and the excitement and sport when the jungle-fowl come quickly and in fair numbers overhead is more to my liking than that which an English pheasant-battue affords.

We passed a very pleasant evening. The collector had brought his capital cook; I had brought with me from Noakholly a large bectifish and some prawns, nearly half the size of lobsters. In addition to gram-fed mutton we had roast jungle-fowl, cockerells with blunt knobs for spurs, and bread sauce, and these were followed by a dish with a woodcock in the centre and four snipes to keep him company; the champagne was dry. After dinner we played one rubber of whist; but we were more inclined to talk than to play the silent scientific game, so we took to hot grog and tobacco, sitting and talking about sport in our great-coats, for the night was chilly and we had no fireplace. After turning in rather early, we carried on a similar attack against

the jungle-fowl next day, only the elephants and beaters were sent off an hour earlier, and after breakfast we cantered on horseback to some ground a little distance off. After dinner on this the second day, I got into my palkee and found myself after a fair night's rest at my house at Noakholly about daybreak.

The existence of large game in Bengal depends on the existence of uncultivated land, either in the shape of extensive forest or of newly formed or newly forming jungles, such as those to be seen on churs and recent alluvial formations. As these strongholds for large game disappear and decrease before the plough, the tigers, buffaloes, bears, large deer, and hogs must, for the most part, disappear and retreat to more distant shelters: an exception may be made with reference to large areas such as Maldah, which have relapsed into uninhabited and abandoned jungles; for there are many places, now covered with trees, jungles, and swamps, where cities, villages, and cultivation undoubtedly existed not many centuries ago. But, as a rule, large game will gradually disappear before cultivation, and the sportsman will have to follow the pursuit of such to the more distant forests and their borders. There are, however, most extensive tracts of country, either hilly and covered with forest, or rocky stony countries in which cultivation cannot yet be made to pay. Of the rocky dry countries I cannot speak; but to the east, the south, and the north of Eastern Bengal are forests and marshy regions, which cannot alter much for very many generations, and the hill-forests which commence on the borders of Chittagong, Tippera, Sylhet, Mymensing, and which extend all along the foot of the Himalayas, are of this nature. I see no reason why the jungle-fowl should not survive in the same numbers as it has hitherto done for centuries. During my time enormous areas of Noakholly, Backergunge, and other districts altered: tree-jungles, marshy plains, and jheels became cultivated; tigers disappeared, and hogs only existed in deserted village jungles and tracts of land which had relapsed into an uncultivated state. But I saw no difference as regarded the ground in which I shot jungle-fowl in Tippera; as it had been before the East India Company's rule, so it was when Her Majesty assumed the title of Empress of India. The rice cultivation had long reached the foot of the hills, but neither rice nor any other crop advantageous to the native Bengalee would grow well on the ascending slopes. The jungle-fowl therefore was, so to speak, undisturbed as regarded his forest stronghold, and could seek, as he had always done, fallen grains of rice in the stubble at the forest verge. His great enemy was the Mahommedan who had purchased the discarded musket sold by the Government when rifles were supplied to native soldiers. If you can keep these Mahommedan sportsmen from firing at the flocks of young jungle-fowl when they come to the rice-plains at harvest-time, with a little preservation for more than one season, you may expect in the jungles that are fitted for it good junglefowl-shooting such as I have described. No Hindoo

will kill jungle-fowl; it is against their caste to do so. It is only in December, January, and February that jungle-fowl congregate in the neighbourhood of the rice-stubbles; after that time they retire to the forests to breed and feed on jungle products. Therefore I see no reason why, with a little harmless preserving, junglefowl-shooting, like snipe-shooting, may not be procurable for many generations to come.

I have been told that tea-planting has ruined junglefowl-shooting, but I did not agree with the statement. There was no shooting of the kind worth the name in the localities chosen for tea-gardens, and none could have been damaged. In time, if tea-planting leads to rice-cultivation the sport should become better, not worse; and as long as huge, I might say illimitable, areas of tree-forests exist on the borders of Eastern Bengal so long will the birds of those forests exist. The cultivation of corn and rice over a small proportion of those forests should not check bird-life in any way, rather it should encourage it.

Many jungle-fowl are shot by stalking; that is, they are seen when feeding some slight distance from the jungle, and the sportsman stalks up as near as he can, fires one shot at the birds on the ground and the other at the flock as it flies into the hill-jungle. Very good snipe-shooting is, as I have said, to be found in all the ground at the skirts of these jungles when it is spongy and fit for those small birds. It was my custom to survey the ground carefully with a binocular before beginning to shoot the snipe: if jungle-fowl were to be seen on the feed, I first schemed to get a shot at these, as there was no fear of disturbing snipe; but the first shot at snipe would send every jungle-fowl into the jungle that happened to be within half a mile's distance.

Another way of getting at these shy birds was to show yourself at a considerable distance; the birds would then retreat to the jungle, but would only hide a few yards from the open ground. You should then mark the exact spot at which the flock entered the jungle, and stalking carefully and against wind, near to this throw a lighted cracker as far into the jungle behind the birds as possible. The sudden detonation of the cracker inside the jungle often has the effect of causing the birds to fly over the low trees further into the forest, and with luck you may on such occasions knock over right and left shots.

In beating for large game—tiger, deer, and bears—along the foot of the hills and other fitting places, jungle-fowl are often put up suddenly and offer shots like grouse; at least when I shot my first jungle-hen in this way I thought I had killed a grouse; but usually the man in the howdah has a ball-gun in his hand, and also probably does not like to run the chance of depriving every one in the line of a shot at large game for the mere killing of a somewhat insignificant bird.

All over Eastern Bengal you hear of expeditions for snipe-shooting, partridge-

shooting, wildfowl-shooting, either with or without boats; but, as a rule, you will not hear of junglefowl-shooting as a sport except in Tippera and Chittagong. But not one who has ever enjoyed a whole winter day's sport, when birds were plentiful, and who has shot them from a howdah, when they have been made to fly by a well-conducted body of beaters and musicians, can deny that the sport equals or surpasses that of any other sport to be got with birds in the plains. Of the enchantments of pheasant-shooting in the lower ranges of the Himalayas I know nothing.

Letter No. 47.

Rhinoceros: two kinds.—Backergunge Soonderbunds.—Resolve to kill a Rhinoceros, and attempt to do so. Reach the ground in boats. Where to hit the animal.—The jungle. —We are taken to a Rhinoceros and left alone. We kill him with a single ball, and fire at others.—Abundance of game in this country, but difficulty in the pursuit of it.

I WISH I had had more experience in shooting the rhinoceros, for it is still to be got in Eastern Bengal by any one who has time and opportunity, though only in the distant outskirts of the province or almost on the sea-shore. There are two kinds of rhinoceros in Bengal, *R. indicus* and *R. sondaicus*. The first is the larger and is found where Mymensing joins Assam, on the east of the Brahmapootra, and in Assam, and exists all along the base of the Himalayan slopes to the north of Rungpore and Purneah; but westward of Puneah it does not belong to the area of Eastern Bengal.

When I was appointed to that inferior sporting station Backergunge I thought to myself that I might at any rate shoot a rhinoceros; and I will tell you how the deed was accomplished. I knew the animal abounded in the Soonderbunds and was to be found all the way from the mouth of the Hoogly to the mouth of the Megna; this is the chief habitat of the lesser rhinoceros. Occasionally one has been killed to the south of Tippera and in Chittagong. The one now in the London Zoological Gardens was captured when very young between Chittagong and Arracan, as it was crossing a muddy river. The whole establishment of Government khedda elephants happened to be on the march when news was brought that a little rhinoceros was in difficulties in some mud, and with the aid of these elephants the animal was taken alive and did well in captivity.

I found that no rhinoceros has ever been known near headquarters at Backergunge, but that the Soonderbund folk and the English planters who had taken up Soonderbund lands reported that they were plentiful between their settlements and the shores of the Bay of Bengal, and I persuaded the

judge to accompany me in a trip to the Bay. Budderuddeen was not with me in those days, nor any shikarry of any value to compare to him; so I got what information I could through the police, who knew shikarries who used to procure venison from the more southern tracts of mangrove and soondry trees. At last I procured the services of two men who for good consideration agreed to take us up to some rhinoceroses, but strongly advised us to confine our attentions to spotted deer and jungle-fowl, as the rhinoceros was a fierce beast, not to be stopped by a bullet.

The country for the sport was most peculiar, for the most part devoid of any water that was not salt; the greater part of the soil was covered by the spring-tides: it was intersected by deep tidal nullahs with muddy banks. The good ground was at least as far off as boats with relays of rowers could reach in two nights' and a day's row, not far from a village which had been established by a colony of Arracanese Mughs, known as "Isla Foolzurree."

We got a comfortable large boat for ourselves and a commodious and fast-pulling boat for the attendants, to serve also as a cook-boat. We loaded both boats with large jars of good water for drinking and cooking purposes, and started down stream about 4.30 P.M., rowing all night and taking advantage of tides under the direction of the shikarries who knew the streams. We soon left regular cultivation and well-populated regions and sailed and rowed all day down streams thickly fringed with trees. Here and there we came to marshy places covered with very high grass, and flags, and marsh-plants. In these tigers, buffaloes, and rhinoceros were to be found occasionally; crocodiles were very numerous, and lovely kingfishers of a kind I had never seen before were common. On the second day we got to the rhinoceros land.

All the way down the judge and I had discussed as to where a rhinoceros should be hit. The judge had killed plenty near the Brahmapootra churs, but off elephants, and he argued for aiming at the shoulder and the neighbourhood of the heart. I declared that I would not fire if I could help it save just behind the ear. We both thought that the hide of a rhinoceros was proof against anything but a heavy bullet projected from a strong charge of powder. I have since come to the conclusion that, during life at least, the hide of a rhinoceros is not much more impenetrable than that of an old urna buffalo. My battery carried bullets fourteen to the pound. The judge had a heavy single rifle that carried a thing like a small cannon-ball, and required a coolie to carry till the time for use arrived. We had no luck the first afternoon, but saw spotted deer and plenty of tracks of both rhinoceros and tigers. I shot a large crow with ball after we got to the boats, and this rather raised our credit with the shikarries; they were to scout for game early next morning and we were to await their reports.

Next morning, after breakfast, one shikarry returned and said rhinoceros had been found, and that the other shikarry was on the watch. We had

to go some distance in small canoes, and then we landed and had to walk over a most extraordinary hard kind of ground. We marched under thick green foliage and among trunks of fair-sized trees; but from the very wide-spreading roots of these trees there grew crops of stumps bigger than ordinary carrots, most difficult to travel among, and very trying to the ankles. Here and there were dense thickets of grassy or shrubby underwood, and large patches of that huge crackling fern called "dinkybon;" the soil was generally covered with an inch or two of mud, and sometimes there were patches of short turf. Generally you could see under the trees for some distance; and if beaters could have been got, deer might have been driven past gunners posted in ambuscade.

After a very long trudge in this trying walking ground we came upon the second shikarry, and a council of war was held. We were each to take only one attendant to carry a spare gun, and to go as silently as possible. I took my most sporting chuprassy and two smooth-bores, one by Sam Smith and one by Joe Manton. The judge, I think, had a double rifle and his man carried the heavy single rifle before mentioned. After a little the shikarry made signs to stop, and after a little reconnoitring he came back and pointed to a patch of dinkybon, and whispered that there was a rhinoceros in it, and that he would now make his salaam and climb up a tree, and leave the rest to us. On this all the other natives declared that they must go up trees, and they all salaamed and went up trees accordingly.

The judge and I agreed to go, one on one side and one on the other of the patch, and to come together at the first call, for both of us knew that two weapons might be required; I went to the left and the judge to the right. Peering about, presently I saw that something was moving in the dry fern-bush, which was about ten feet high, so I stood by the trunk of a tree about twenty-five yards from the fern, and put the Joe Manton gun against the tree on full-cock, and held the Sam Smith ready. Soon I saw a nose poked out, then the eye, and then the ear of a rhinoceros; as soon as this came out I let fly, and you can scarcely conceive the row which followed—something between the roar of an elephant and the neigh of a horse, but far stronger. The smoke hung, and as it passed I saw a rhinoceros standing, looking directly towards me. He stood a minute. I knew it was no use to fire at his lowered head; there is no vulnerable place there, and the ball would have glanced. I called to the judge and said, "Here he is in front, looking at me!" but I did not move from the trunk of the tree, and I do not know if the rhinoceros distinctly made me out; they are said to have bad sight. The animal turned round, and as he did so I shot him high in the shoulder and he bolted. I followed, but was instantly stopped, for there lay a rhinoceros stone dead. There had been two in the bush, and my ball behind the ear had killed the first. After the judge and I had made sure that the beast was really dead, we went after the other. The blood had

gushed out on the trees and was frothy; we argued that the ball had penetrated the lungs and would be mortal. After going a little way further we considered that we should certainly lose ourselves, so we stopped and retraced our steps to the dead rhinoceros, and, after much shouting, got our attendants to come to us.

The next thing was to cut off the head and send it to the boats. This was no easy task. I had an ordinary sheathed hunting-knife, and the judge had a large pocket-knife; but these were far too small for the purpose, and it took us nearly an hour cutting, hacking, and twisting before the head was got off. It was then tied with jungle creepers to a thick stick cut for the purpose, and sent off to the boats on the shoulders of two men.

We then spent some hours trying to get more rhinoceros. We saw, I think, six; but they were on the move, and either smelt or heard us, and we never got near enough for deadly action. The judge, who was an excellent shot, fired and wounded some animals; but no good was done. The walking was at times most difficult: the trees and foliage were characteristic of Soonderbund jungle, such as are to be found nowhere else in India proper; tigers and deer evidently abounded. It was impossible to stalk animals from a distance—first, because the walking was difficult; secondly, because of the fern which crackled as man or animal passed through it. I was transferred to Noakholly soon afterwards, and never revisited these parts: but the judge went again; he could get no gentleman to accompany him, and had a few natives with him. He put up a tiger and severely wounded it; in searching for this animal, a chuprassy came upon it and was killed. After this the judge went no more. These places are said to be most unhealthy for Europeans; fevers of the worst type are soon contracted, and the Soonderbunds are considered deadly if any stay is made in them.

But there is no doubt that between the northern parts of Backergunge and the shores of the Bay of Bengal there spreads a country full of large game, and where a sportsman, if he could retain his health and learn the localities and plan out the proper methods for shooting, might obtain grand sport. There are no elephants to be got; there is no drinkable water; there are no villages were supplies can be got; there are no roads nor bridges, and ever-recurring deep muddy tidal salt-streams. An enterprising sportsman, with a good steam-launch, might perhaps be able to work the country; but during my time I never heard that any Europeans had been able systematically or effectively to hunt up any portion of it. Every now and then some such short expedition as I made is undertaken, and occasionally some English gentleman connected with the ownership of Soonderbund grants kills a few tigers and rhinoceroses and deer; but generally fever puts a stop to his ardour for sport. The forests are, however, gradually disappearing before cultivation, in spite of the insalubrity of the soil, and villages are springing up, and steamers go through the deep channels, and native craft through the smaller streams.

I never heard anything more of the rhinoceros I wounded or those fired into by the judge; but immediately after I left the district the horn of a rhinoceros was offered for sale in the bazaar of Burrisawel, the head station of the district, and the judge had an opinion that this was the horn belonging to the second animal of the two to which we had been taken by the shikarries.

This rhinoceros seems to be a harmless animal, feeding on branches of trees and the rank succulent herbage of muddy swamps. It never appears to visit cultivated places or to damage crops; unless roused it has no murderous propensity; it kills no other animal, and its size and thick hide protect it from the tiger. The unhealthy climate of the Soonderbunds has prolonged its existence to this date; but ere long, as these salt and tidal lands are brought under rice- and jute-cultivation, the animal will disappear. In the struggle for existence it will not be able to fight the battle by adapting itself to change even to the extent that tigers and hogs seem to do; these shift their quarters, and constantly appear in new localities.

Letter No. 48.

Rhinoceros indicus: the jungles in which it is found near Assam. I never shot one. Elephants much afraid of them.—Bears.—A Badger.—Bears not numerous now in Bengal. Large skull. The cries of the wounded. Courage.—Kill three Bears.—Often shot on foot in other parts of India, but the jungles of Eastern Bengal not open enough for that sport. Occasionally speared from horseback.—Bears tenacious of life. Very numerous in Cuttack. Destructive to sugar-canes. Feast on bees and honey.

The last letter referred to *Rhinoceros sondaicus*; but the *Rhinoceros indicus*, generally referred to as the rhinoceros of Bengal sportsmen, is a different and a larger animal, inhabiting extensive swamps and marshes, where the grass is the tallest and densest to be found, and where the jungle called in Mymensing "taradhām" occupies large spaces of soft muddy soil, which I should think would only suit heavy animals in the dry season. In these thick grass-jungles no man on foot can make his way: he must either follow paths made by elephants, buffaloes, and rhinoceros, or cut his way through them, or go on elephants; and it is on elephants alone that the sport of rhinoceros-shooting has been carried on in the regions of the Brahmapootra churs and in the valleys of Assam, and in the Terai at the base of the Himalayas, about Rungpore and Purneah.

I went after a rhinoceros at times; but neither in the neighbourhood of the Brahmapootra nor in the north of Purneah did I ever see one. If you can accompany any sportsman who is acquainted with good rhinoceros-ground, and have leisure and desire to kill these animals, you will have better luck.

I neither knew the country nor Europeans nor natives in it, and contented myself with hog-hunting and tiger-shooting; I cannot therefore relate tales of rhinoceros-slaughter in which I took part.

But numbers of other sportsmen and friends killed them yearly, and their skulls were to be seen in the verandahs of many houses in Mymensing and Dinagepore and Rungpore. From looking at these it was at once seen that the brain took up only a small space in the huge bony head, and that bullets in the head need not necessarily prove mortal. Well-directed shots, however, seemed easily to have pierced to the brain; and from all I could learn the chief thing in rhinoceros-shooting was to manage to get as close to the animal as possible, and the only difficulty in doing this was the great fear elephants had of approaching a rhinoceros at all. Sometimes these animals are pugnacious, and when they charge the line of elephants the latter animal, as a rule, takes to flight and cannot be brought to face the rhinoceros at all. I have heard stories and seen pictures of elephants having been knocked over by rhinoceroses; still I never heard of any serious accident that had occurred. An elephant that will face a fighting rhinoceros is a most valuable animal. Much depends on the mahout; but elephants are curiously uncertain in temper and courage. My best elephant had a great reputation for good behaviour with rhinoceroses, and I killed scores of tigers from her back; nevertheless, even with Sowdaugor, the pluckiest mahout I ever had, she ran away—positively declined to be brought close up to a plucky rat: the courageous little animal stuck out its fur, squeaked, and jumped towards the ponderous elephant, which tucked up its trunk, screamed, backed away, and could not be brought forward, though I tried for quite a quarter of an hour to force the elephant to close quarters.

There was another animal belonging to the large game of Eastern Bengal of which I killed comparatively few. This was the bear. Bears are not found now in any of the districts of Eastern Bengal but Dacca, Mymensing, Rungpore, and Purneah; I never got true reports of any in Tippera or Chittagong, and there are none between these districts and the Hoogly.

One morning, when I was at Comilla, in Tippera, news was brought of a bear which had been marked into a patch of low grass. I got some elephants and hastened to the spot, as I had never then met with a bear. The place seemed most unlikely as a retreat for so large an animal. However, I beat it up and turned out and killed a fine badger—an animal differing very little in appearance from an English badger. This was the nearest approach to a bear I ever met south of Dacca, and the only badger I ever knew killed in Bengal; probably badgers are not unprocurable, but they are nocturnal in their habits and not sought as game.

Bears at one time were numerous in the Bhowal forest in Dacca; but their numbers were very considerably reduced by the time I became acquainted with those jungles. I took some trouble about them at first; but they

puzzled Budderuddeen. He never could harbour one, or bring me really good reports about them. As a rule they kill neither human beings nor cattle, and therefore, even if seen, they were not reported to the Dacca sportsmen. There were no dead carcases to keep them restricted to any particular patches of jungle; they would wander about tree-jungles and devour jungle-fruits and honey, chiefly in hard ground, where their footmarks, which are unmistakable, left very poor tracks. Generally, when I tried to find them according to the reports of villagers I was disappointed; and all the bears I shot were put up unexpectedly when on the look-out for other game.

But still I killed plenty of bears: some within twenty miles of Dacca; some all along the banks of the Bunsee river; many in the rosebush-jungles of Mymensing; and some on the hills of Lower Assam, not far from the Brahmapootra. I have a skull beside me now; it is nearly fifteen inches long. Few tiger-skulls are as long as this. The lower jaw is deep; it is underhung, and the teeth weak as compared with a tiger's. It is more of a vegetable-feeding animal, though carnivorous to some extent also.

This large skull belonged to a Dacca bear. I was after a tiger, and had some native sportsmen out with me, friends of a large landed proprietor, who was a Brahmin and of a sporting turn of mind. I had beaten up a great number of detached jungles, and had sent the line forward towards another beat, when I heard loud shouting and some shots, and hurried forward only just in time to get a very long shot at a huge black bear rolling fast across a rice-stubble field; without stopping the elephant to take careful aim, I fired well ahead, and luckily plugged the bear in the shoulder with a heavy Daw-Jacob bullet, and he fell, uttering most wretched and human-like groans. These lamentations make one feel like a murderer, and are a drawback to bear-shooting. The termination of many a keenly-followed chase is often mournful! What can be more cruel than the end of a stag-hunt with the Devon and Somerset stag-hounds in Badgeworthy Water, after a two-hours' run? The poor beast is hunted up and down, backwards and forwards, half-drowning in the stream, with hounds tearing at him and merely torturing him, till after long delay the huntsman gets the knife to his throat. The hog-deer, when chased on horseback, cries like a child or a hare before the spear kills him; and bears, both young and old, shock you and make you feel ashamed almost as they expire. But the gallant boar fights till the last and never utters a squeak.

Bears are very plucky too, and will attack any man or thing when angered. Several times in the Mymensing rosebush-jungles I have at first sight mistaken them for boars. Once I never knew my mistake till the bear had seized the elephant's trunk with both paws; and, strange to say, that bear escaped. There were two, and the bushes were very thick, and the other

animal was the most conspicuous and attracted attention with a result fatal to himself; whilst firing at the second bear the first somehow escaped.

Another time, in the neighbourhood of the Bunsee, some of the party had roused a tiger, and we were in hot pursuit, endeavouring to prevent the animal from reaching thick tree-jungle and forest, where it would most likely find security, when I suddenly turned up three bears. Without stopping I fired four shots: one bear fell and another was hard hit; but I cheered on the line after the tiger and would not allow any stoppage. It was of no avail, the tiger escaped; indeed I had never seen him. We at length returned to the bears: one was dead, the second was crying most mournfully in a bush and was easily disposed of, the third was fresh-found not far off and also added to the bag.

There is no reason why bears should not be shot on foot, and they are so shot in most parts of India; but in Eastern Bengal the jungles are too dense, high, and thorny for beaters, and bears are for the most part killed from elephants. They have been speared occasionally in the Behar provinces, and, I believe, also in Cuttack. I never was present on any of these occasions, and in the zillahs of Eastern Bengal bears cannot be induced to face open country, and there is no low bush-jungle through which a man could ride a bear as he would a hog, or undoubtedly the feat would have been often accomplished.

I never had the luck to find a bear up a tree, and the tales of their climbing for honey and fruit have reached me only through books. Two Mymensing sportsmen who killed numbers of bears in their day told me that no instance of shooting bears in trees had occurred to them, and I never heard that a bear, however hotly pursued, ever took to climbing a tree to escape.

Bears are very tenacious of life: their thick fur is deceptive, and many a bullet hits without mortally wounding a bear. When wounded he is exceedingly savage, notwithstanding his cries, and any beater or native who comes in his way may be terribly wounded or scalped, or even killed. Occasionally I have known of bears that had killed more than one villager. Although a reward is given by Government for the destruction of a bear, as in the case of tigers and leopards, very few skins are brought to the collectorates; the animal is clearly decreasing in Eastern Bengal. If only a part of what I was told in Cuttack was true, they must be very numerous in that province. One sportsman told me that he had been at the death of nine in one forenoon, and his description of the sport among the rocks and caves was most stirring. In this sport it is as well for two or more sportsmen to keep close together, for if the two barrels are discharged and the bear only wounded he may prove a most ugly customer.

Bears, as well as hogs and even jackals, are destructive to sugar-cane crops, and do much damage where cane is cultivated near hills and forests. I have heard complaints, and I have known of bears having been found and killed

from sugar-cane khets; but I never met with one myself in the sugar-crops either in Dacca or Mymensing. There are no mowah-trees in the east; these are the favourite resorts for bears to the westward; but all over Eastern Bengal jungles there is an abundance of sour fruit and berry, and white-ant hills are much too common. Bees and honey they feast on also, eating the sweet and the comb and the maggot with perfect impartiality.

Letter No. 49.

Leopards: abundant. Only one kind, often called Panther, referred to in these letters. Very numerous in some places.—The Frenchman and his dog in Tippera.—Generally dogs useless.—A Leopard carries off a dog from my tent door.—The Phēāl.—Leopard-shooting on foot.—Take a deal of killing: a fairly placed shot not immediately fatal.

If I failed to shoot many rhinoceroses and bears, I had no difficulty in shooting any number of leopards. I have shot them almost in all districts and in the greatest variety of places. I have shot them in houses and in vultures' nests, on branches of trees and in villages, in gardens and in tree-jungles, on islands and on the mainland, in the plains and in the hills, close to headquarter stations and in remote, distant, desolate places, in dry ground and in marsh. I have found them of various sizes and have taken their cubs; I have known fierce and also sneakish leopards; I have shot them on foot and on elephants, and have known them to be speared off horseback when found by hog-hunting parties; I have had them beaten out of jungles by men, and have hunted them with dogs; and yet I never made them the object of systematic steady pursuit or spent much money in killing them, merely shooting them as I came across them, or when news that they had been harboured in likely places came to my knowledge.

They are often caught alive in traps. A very splendid black leopard was trapped the very first day I visited the city of Dacca, and exhibited in his cage. They are constantly caught in nets in Tippera and Sylhet by villagers when killing hogs; they are poisoned by baits and shot with poisoned arrows. Cultivation has not driven them from the country; deserted gardens and what are well known as village-jungles are their most favourite haunts. They prey to a certain extent on deer, jackals, and wild animals; but they also eat dead carcases and are most partial to village dogs, and prowl about villages, seize persons asleep in their houses, and destroy numbers of children and even grown-up people annually. Sheep and goats can only be preserved

from them by being shut up at night. In fact, with the exception of snakes, they are more destructive than any wild creature in Eastern Bengal.

My remarks apply to one kind of leopard only: it is often called panther. Except in size I recognize no difference of importance among the leopards I was in the habit of examining for more than twenty years.

I have killed beautiful cats of different kinds, generally in trees. The chaus, or wild cat of the grassy jungles, is very common, and occasionally I have met in swampy nullahs *Felis celidogaster* or *viverrina*, a very fierce and large fishing-cat; but none of them approach leopards in size, nor can any of them be confounded with the ordinary leopard.

I am inclined to think that leopards are more numerous and common than is generally supposed. Those persons of my acquaintance who have systematically and keenly worked the pursuit of leopards have found them more numerous than they expected; and I myself, when hunting jackals with English fox-hounds, which I did on and off for six years, was astonished at the number of leopards I came across. From the window of my room at Mymensing looking across the river I could see three places within an hour's walk where leopards lived. I often put them up either hunting jackal or shooting, or when hog-hunting. When strangers came to see me and accompanied us on the elephants either for hog-hunting or coursing, I could almost always procure them a shot at a leopard.

At the eastern extremity of Tippera, and very close to the Noakholly boundary, there lived at one time a young man of French extraction who was in charge of some estates, and who was always leopard-shooting and killed great numbers. When, as magistrate, I was encamped in that neighbourhood I went out with this gentleman. His method of shooting was simple: he had a shikarry constantly scouting about and specially engaged in seeking for footmarks in soft ground; the Frenchman, who had generally an elephant or two under his orders, walked about with a nondescript sort of dog, half pariah and half spaniel, or some such mongrel. When this dog smelt a leopard (and, I presume, leopards have an extremely powerful odour about them) he would cock his ears and point out from a respectful distance where the leopard lay. If the leopard was on the move the dog would keep moving and giving signs, but without barking or any show of excitement. A more stupid-looking, sluggish dog I never saw; but he was invaluable in his way. The Frenchman kept on peeping and peering about, wholly regardless of anything the leopard might do in the way of attack, till he could sight the animal. He then deliberately killed him almost to a certainty with a single shot. I saw him shoot a leopard this way, silently accompanying him with a gun in my hand. Occasionally he would get on an elephant; but this was merely to cause the leopard to move when supposed to be in such dense jungle that there could be no other way of getting sight of him.

Of course I never could follow this plan, for I never could procure such a

dog. I have hunted leopards with dogs and been at several such hunts with other people's dogs. As a rule our dogs would either do nothing or were too plucky. If they went in at the leopard he invariably killed them. I bought a well-known, rough, fierce bull-terrier, which belonged to an officer who died of cholera at Dacca, and was sold as part of his estate. The dog was sent to me at Tippera and killed immediately by the first leopard I took him to. Leopards feed greatly on dogs, and are not much afraid of them.

The leopord is sneakish in his habits and is hardly ever seen in the daytime, and has great powers of hiding himself from observation. But he is bold at night, and shows no great timidity in coming close to fires where men are on the move. I was encamped on the bank of the magnificent tank of Juggernathdiggy, in Tippera, for junglefowl-shooting, and after the day's sport was dining in my tent by candle-light; at a little distance was another tent used for cooking and for the attendants. Camp fires were burning and several men were moving about in the dark at about 8 P.M. A pariah dog came to pick up any scraps he might get from the dinner as the plates were being carried away. A leopard suddenly pounced on the dog and took him clean off into some thorny jungle about twenty yards from my tent. I took a gun which was ready loaded and lanterns and went to the bushes, and we could hear the leopard growling and tearing at the dog; but it was dark and I could not fire. We heard no more of the leopard during the night, and next morning we found the remains of the dog. The jungle on the banks of that tank was extensive and thorny, and it would have taken a whole day to beat it. I had few elephants with me, and, besides, I was not going to give up a good day's junglefowl-shooting for the uncertain chance of getting a leopard.

Though the leopard was no more heard, the jackals in the neighbourhood were noisy for a long time. The instant the dog was seized the jackals seemed to know it and set up the cry known as the "phēāl." It was very dark, but it seemed to me that all the jackals in the neighbourhood were telling each other that a leopard was committing murder. This peculiar cry in no way resembles the usual well-known howl which all jackals make at times every night and morning. I may as well remark that jackals are said to be exceedingly scarce as you go south from Tippera and Chittagong. In Arracan they are comparatively scarce, but seem to have increased in numbers of late years. Jackals appear to follow cultivation and the introduction of villages into hitherto unpopulated districts.

I shot the greatest number of leopards I killed on foot. I used to flatter myself that I could put a ball pretty nearly exactly where I liked into a leopard at from twenty-five to forty yards distance, and for a long time it seemed quite easy and safe to act on this presumption. I had two warnings which ought to have made me more careful. I was shooting among patches of jungle separated from each other by small spaces where rice had been

grown and got a fair shot at a large leopard crossing from one patch to another. This time, by-the-bye, I was in the howdah. I was uncertain as to the effect of the shot; I ought to have hit, and did not think that I had missed. However, the animal did not fall, but bounded into the next patch of jungle; this I beat most carefully twice, and found no trace of the leopard. I got off the elephant, intending to ride home; but first I examined the place where I shot; there I picked up a piece of bone about the size of a shilling, evidently knocked out of the leopard's rib by the bullet. On this I put Budderuddeen on the trail to see as far as possible where the leopard had entered and where he had left the patch of jungle. His footmarks showed where he had entered, and there within five yards, or probably one more bound, he was lying dead. Clearly a well-placed shot not far from the heart had failed to stop him, and in spite of it he had got into the jungle. During this short time a colony of black stinging-ants had discovered the body; it was covered with them, and they bit most venomously when we handled the dead leopard to put him on the elephant.

Another time I had a leopard beaten out towards me; thinking he would take a certain line I took up a position close to a tree. The leopard came fast and straight towards me. I do not think he meant to charge absolutely; but still he came directly at me. I fired and made no impression; I stepped back, and as the animal passed at about twelve yards distance or less I put a ball into his neck, which broke the spine and killed him. On examination it appeared that the ball had cut the skin of the chin and also had made a cut along the brisket; in fact, the ball was about an inch too low—a little higher and it would have gone through the head. This showed the difference which a very small distance in the place where a bullet strikes might make. The shot would in no way have stopped the animal had he really meant to attack me. But in spite of these two warnings I continued to have leopards beaten out by elephants to the spots where I elected to wait for them on foot.

Letter No. 50.

A Leopard gets hold of me and punishes me severely.—Three Leopards at once.—Effects of my mauling.—Leopards on trees: in huts. Shot by poisoned arrows. Vary greatly in size without decided specific difference. Constantly found when beating for other game. Afford only inferior sport.

Soon after this I came to grief. One morning it was reported that two leopards were fighting in some jungle not very far from a hath, or village

market, about an hour's distance from my house. My elephants were handy, and the assistant magistrate started off with me at once. The jungle consisted of thorny bushes with very thick undergrowth. The assistant looked after the elephants and the beating, and I dodged about outside and in the open places where I could get good chances. We stirred up the leopards at once and soon killed, or thought we killed, a fine male. He was taken off to the market-place. The female sneaked about cleverly in the underwood; we had several shots at her, and hit her six or seven times; but she had still plenty of vitality. I was watching for her in one direction, according to signs from the elephants, when suddenly I saw a great red thing in the air; it struck me with tremendous force on the back and left shoulder and hurled me to the ground with extreme violence. This was the leopard, whose claws pierced into my flesh. She sat on me for an instant, looked into my face with her great green eyes; I felt her warm breath. She seized me by the left arm, dragged me into a bush, gave me a most painful shake, and then luckily left me. Budderuddeen and some natives who were close gave a shout; but I got up, not feeling much hurt, with my white clothing all red with blood; but it was the leopard's blood, not my own. The assistant came down and said my arm was not broken, and I got into the howdah and went on with the sport.

We soon killed the female leopard from the elephants; but there was a third leopard, and it was when looking for this one that the female managed to leap on me without my perceiving her attack. This, the third and largest of the three leopards, gave little trouble. He was killed and padded, and we went to put the first leopard on the elephants; but when we got to the hath lo and behold he was not dead, but, with a broken spine, was sitting on his haunches growling at the assembled villagers! We then knocked him on the head with some bamboo poles, and the three leopards were placed on three elephants and marched in procession through the principal bazaar to my house to be skinned. I believe on this occasion that the two leopards had been fighting for the good graces of the female.

I thought nothing of the wounds; the doctor dressed them. But in a day or two the arm got very bad, and it became inflamed, swelled up to a great extent, and was most offensive. The doctor said matter had formed and must be released: I had seen the said doctor operate a few days before for a somewhat similar thing on a prisoner in the jail hospital; I had not been struck with his dexterity and did not much like the prospect. It is not pleasant to be lying helpless and in pain in one room and to hear your assistant and an inexperienced surgeon sharpening an instrument to operate on you with in the next, and asking each other if it is sharp enough. However, they came in, and the assistant held my arm, and the doctor plunged the instrument in to a great depth, but did not find the "occult matter, a

difficult thing to find always in deep-seated wounds." After this the doctor thought the case too serious for himself, and he packed me off to Calcutta in a boat. The Calcutta doctors pulled me through without the loss of my arm. I merely lost a great deal of pay on account of absence from office; this, added to the pain and suffering, was severe.

I do not think harm would have happened if I had known that there were two animals still in the jungle; probably the third leopard was just in front of me when the second attacked me. I consider that exposure to a leopard on foot, with due precaution and a proper weapon, is only a fair sporting risk, and accidents must happen occasionally. It is quite different with a tiger, and I should never have so exposed myself to one; it would have been certain death had I done so.

Leopards often resort to trees. Once a party of us was taken to an old tree on which vultures had nested for many a year, and we were assured that a leopard lived in the huge fagot-looking pile. We were on elephants. Something apparently was in the nest: one of the party fired into it, and immediately a leopard half ran and half fell down the tree; as soon as he reached the ground he received a volley and was finished off. I have shot leopards not only on the thick arms or branches of trees, but lying full length on the thick leafy twigs. On such occasions you walk close up and fire into your favourite mortal spot; the blood comes gushing out, and with a quiver the beast falls with a thump on to the ground.

I have shot a leopard through a window: he had gone into a house and was shut in. I was sent for, and he was shown to me crouching in a corner. I have shot them also in "pān barees," those carefully covered-in gardens where the climbing plant in the leaf of which betel-nut is wrapped for chewing grows; these neatly-cultivated shady places are said to be favourite spots for a leopard to remain in during the glare of the day. In fact I have found more leopards in and about villages than in wild and distant jungle; they are seldom found in those wet marshy nullahs of which hogs and tigers are so fond. I do not recollect ever having seen a leopard take water and swim. Tigers are continually crossing deep streams and take long swims. As a rule, tigers require water close to their haunts, and to hogs soft marshy ground is almost essential; I do not know how they manage in dry rocky ground, but in Bengal I never found them in such.

Twice I came on dead leopards; these had been recently wounded by poisoned arrows and had wandered a certain distance and died. In both cases death had just taken place sufficiently long before I found them to spoil the skins. The hair came off; so the heads were cut off and the bodies left to the vultures.

In beating for leopards with elephants the beast shows little fight, and sneaks under the bushes and hides in any trench or hole; he thus gives a

deal of trouble, seldom taking to the open, and being generally killed within a few feet of the elephant. Many are shot by natives from "machāns," or platforms. I never cared for that sport.

Leopards vary exceedingly in size, indeed unaccountably, and some think that there are two distinct kinds which show no absolute difference but in size. I recorded no measurements of leopards at the time they were killed, and therefore cannot give exact details, as I have done with reference to tigers and hogs. Blyth, who wrote in the 'Indian Sporting Magazine' on the Felidæ, apparently knew nothing personally of leopard-shooting; he complained of the want of skins, and the only measurements he gives relate to small leopards killed apparently in the Madras Presidency. Jerdon, in his 'Mammals of India,' gives a meagre account of the leopard, which he calls the "Pard," a name I never knew used: his account chiefly is an extract from Blyth's. Writing from memory alone, I should say that I killed many large leopards between eight and nine feet long, taking the total length of the unskinned body from snout to the end of the tail. The tails of leopards are long, and much longer proportionately than those of tigers. The size of the ordinary full-grown leopards I met with was about that of an English pointer dog; but some were nearly twice as large and twice as heavy—able to kill the common sized village cow; and others, though smaller, were quite full-grown. I could distinguish no good specific difference between these large and small varieties, either in shape of skull or teeth, or mode of coloration or arrangement of spots.

Little information can be gathered from native names. Leopards are generally called tigers when talked of at first. The term "Sheer," which means lion, is often applied to the tiger; "Sheeāl" (corrupted into "Heeāl"), "Bagh," "Kendwah," are names applied to both tigers and leopards; and "Cheeta," or "Cheeta-bagh," is used for the hunting-leopard as well as for *Felis pardus*.

At Mymensing we had a pack of fox-hounds for hunting jackals. I carried the horn and was huntsman. We constantly came upon leopards with the hounds both in the thatching-grass khets and in the jhow or tamarisk-jungles. Once I almost stepped upon a very large leopard with my horse; he lay quite still, crouching and looking into my face. I immediately called away the hounds; but he was roused, bounded up, and struck one hound on the ear, and then with a succession of grand leaps made his way into the tree and village jungle which was close. The hound, though knocked over and bleeding, was not much the worse.

At times I came on very young cubs with the hounds; immediately I took the hounds away, fearing that the female leopard might kill or injure some of them. I have known cubs of both tigers and leopards taken and brought up as tame; but they are treacherous, dangerous pets, and before long have either to be destroyed or confined in cages. A tiger cub brought up by a zemindar near Dacca had its claws and large teeth extracted or cut down

under chloroform, and was kept strongly chained; but even then it managed to do a deal of mischief.

The Government reward for killing a leopard in Bengal is half that given for a tiger. A great many skins are brought to the collectorates, the animals having been killed by shikarries, mostly with poisoned arrows, and some from machāns. But leopard-skins are worth more now than the amount of reward, which was 2 rs. 8 annas; so many are carefully prepared for sale.

Leopards have been often ridden and killed with hog-spears when met with out hog-hunting and turned out into ground fit for riding. I never speared one myself nor saw one speared, nor, indeed, did I ever see a leopard take across good riding-ground. Near Dacca, close to Neverblank, we once turned a fine tiger out of some bushes; but we let him go, it would have been mad folly to have attempted to spear him. But very soon after I left India my friend Lyall and a party near the same place turned a leopard into the open, rode and speared him. One of the party was an excellent draughtsman; he drew the scene, it was photographed, and I give a picture from the photo. I consider this a very valuable picture, for I have never seen an ordinary Bengal pig-sticking scene so well depicted. The style of horse and the costume as worn in the "mofussil" are strictly true; the spears are correctly drawn, and the ground exactly shows easy riding-ground near Dacca. I have heard of leopards being speared in the Rungpore and other districts.

I much doubt if you will ever regard leopard-shooting as a distinct sport worthy of special pursuit: probably you will meet with the animal often in the course of your other shooting and hunting opportunities, and every now and then you will be told of a fresh kill, probably attributed to a tiger, and in this way may bag a number of these animals. I shall now take leave of the Felidæ as regards these letters, and write to you in my next about deer.

Letter No. 51.

Deer. Different kinds to be met with.—Hog-Deer. At times easy to shoot, at times difficult. Often speared from horseback when hogs are scarce and ground suitable.—Fatal accident deer-shooting in rosebush-jungle in Mymensing.—Great numbers of Deer.—A vicious male Elephant.—Hog-Deer might be coursed with greyhounds.—The Sambhur Deer. Stalking unknown in Bengal. Generally killed at close quarters. He allows a near approach. Often carries off a number of bullets. Horns not so large as to the westward.

If you have any shooting in the jungles of Eastern Bengal you must come across deer, and probably you will meet with five kinds:—

1. The sambhur (*Rusa aristotelis*), called in various places sambhur, burra singha, or gous.

2. The hog-deer (*Axis porcinus*), or para.

3. The spotted deer (*Axis maculatus*), or cheetul.

4. The swamp-deer (*Rucervus Duvaucellii*), or bārāh singha (with twelve points).

5. The barking-deer (*Cervulus aureus*), called in some parts the jungle-sheep, or kakur. Besides these in Cuttack I shot the mouse-deer (*Memimna indica*), and in Purneah I met with antelopes (*Antilope bezoarctica*), and in Cuttack I shot the four-horned antelope.

The deer most common in the districts bordering the Ganges, Brahmapootra, and Megna, and found in almost all grassy jungles in Bengal, is the hog-deer. As soon as ever I joined my first appointment away from Calcutta I shot hog-deer, before ever my traps had reached the station. The judge of Rajshahye sent me out at once on his elephants and lent me three good guns. I never shot better in my life than with these guns, seeing that in the first four shots (the first I ever took from an elephant, and firing with ball) I killed two bucks and a doe, the latter at a long distance. It was a long time before I ever shot so many deer again in so few shots, possibly I never did so. As for shooting hog-deer in long grass, when they will not face the open, it is most difficult shooting, and I believe I have missed a dozen shots running, and I have met men who have shot all the season and never bagged a hog-deer in grass. If you are standing on the ground and obtain a clear shot at a hog-deer at about fifty yards you may kill every shot; as they bolt out of the grass and go a fast burst across short openings of clear ground, if you are on an elephant it is easy to miss them.

In some places they are very numerous: you will generally find them in the same sort of jungle as you would beat for hogs, and the two animals are often found together. Indeed, when hogs are scarce and the ground fit, it is very common to ride and spear hog-deer. They are harder to ride down than hogs: when tired out and about to be speared they scream out in the most mournful lamentable way, worse than a hare before a dog and not unlike a child crying; this makes deer-spearing appear very cruel, and men seldom persevere in it.

It makes a difference if the ground on which hog-deer are ridden is hard or soft, and whether the deer has been feeding on hard corn or green soft herbage. At Rajshahye I never speared a deer, though I rode my very hardest; we even had relays, and stationed riders at places to take up the running, and failed even then; but I certainly very nearly speared one once—in fact I missed my stroke. When, however, I tried to ride a fine buck at Doudcandee, in Tippera, where the rice-stubbles were soft and deep, I doubled into him in comparatively no time, and soon put a spear through him. Subsequently I speared hog-deer often in Noakholly, Tippera, and Dacca, but only when hogs were scarce, as they were considered the only fit animals to ride when they could be found.

Hog-deer like benna-grass and thatching-grass growing thickly, with water and swamp on the one side and crops of mustard, oil, rice, &c. on the other—just the very places where hogs and partridges, hares and floriken are to be found. They are also extremely partial to rosebush-jungle; and in the latter I have seen them more numerous than in any other jungle. I once saw a fatal accident when shooting in rosebush-jungle in Mymensing.

The party consisted of the collector, the magistrate, a planter, and myself. We had plenty of elephants. The rose-bushes were most abundantly stocked with game; besides the very great likelihood of a tiger (for we often met with them at Toldoodung) and of swamp-deer, we found hog-deer in scores, plenty of black partridges, a good sprinkling of khyah partridges (called here "chickore"), and numbers of hares. The collector was a good shot, the planter a poor shot, and the magistrate had never shot a deer.

There was a great amount of blazing; it was not very easy to hit the deer as glimpses of them appeared among the thick roses. The collector and I agreed to shoot only bucks. After padding a few, the magistrate said if he and the planter could go by themselves they might kill a deer or two, so they left us and went a little beat of their own. In less than half an hour we heard a tremendous outcry and saw that we were signalled to assist, and thinking that our friends had found a tiger and killed him, we hastened up.

Each of the party had brought elephants, and the young magistrate had among those he had got hold of obtained a young male that was half crazy and unmanageable and bad tempered; and on this he had put a sort of shikarry who had attached himself to the magistrate. This man too was half-witted. Between them they managed to kill a hog-deer, and great was the rejoicing thereat. The bad elephant was taken up to the dead deer, and the half-witted shikarry slipped down over the elephant's tail to cut the deer's throat, when the huge beast at once sat down on him, and when he got up he kicked the man about with his feet. The man was not dead when we reached him; we put him on a guddy and took him to the nearest village and he very soon died; fourteen of his ribs were broken, and his thigh-bone and his jaw. It was a terrible smash. In addition to the deer that caused this disaster, the collector and I bagged sixteen male hog-deer. It was seldom I tried to make a bag of hog-deer; two or three nice ones suffice for any party. As a rule, when other game is expected, hog-deer are allowed to pass unharmed.

It was at this very place, Toldoodung, in the roses, that the same planter put up a fine tiger, and instead of at once hastening to the nurcot, a sort of very strong-stemmed tall grass which grows only in morass, where neither man nor elephant can penetrate, and which was the only safe place the tiger could retreat to, the planter came at once to me at the other side of the jungle; I hastened round and by great exertion just saw the tiger disappear into the nurcot, from which he might so easily have been cut off or inter-

cepted. Here too the wildfowl-shooting was excellent. I was told it was a great place for bears; but I found none. There were plenty of fine boars, but the rosebush-jungles were so extensive that the causing clever old-stagers to take to the open would have demanded very skilful arrangements. All this jungle went under water in the rains, and every quadruped must have left Toldoodung plain for the forest and hills.

I never actually coursed hog-deer with greyhounds; it has been done, and I should think the sport was good. I got a pair of greyhounds for the purpose at Noakholly, where deer were not generally plentiful; but the first day I went out the two dogs gave chase to a boar and the dog was at once disembowelled. The bitch was so frightened that she would not chase anything, and there were no hares at Noakholly.

I kept some hog-deer in my compound; they were very tame and bred annually, at night they were regularly shut up with the poultry. The horns of the hog-deer are worth nothing as trophies; and as venison the haunches are not particularly good.

The next deer which will probably fall before you is the sambhur, or gous—an animal nearly as big as a horse; the tail of one now on my table (my only trophy connected with this species) measures eighteen inches. This is the deer you so often read about in Indian sporting tales. The young English idea connects him with deer-stalking in the highlands of Scotland, and long and arduous runs with the Devon and Somerset stag-hounds. Nothing of the kind is ever thought of in Eastern Bengal. The animal is only to be found in tree-jungle and thickets, and in the densest grass near large extent of forest or jungle-covered hills. I have shot numbers and met with them constantly for years; but I never saw one feeding out in the open, however early I might have sought the jungle side. They were almost all shot with spherical bullets from smooth-bore guns, and seldom at a greater distance than fifty yards.

The gous is always considered a prize, and when the whereabouts of one is known or when one has been roused he is generally pursued and as generally killed; his only chance is when he manages to make good his escape into unlimited heavy forest-jungle, where he cannot be intercepted. His first rush, when alarmed, is grand; he lays his horns back, puts his nose in the air, presents his tough-hided neck to the yielding branches of the tall underwood, and crashes and plunges through the thicket with extraordinary strength. I have no reason for supposing that his senses of smell and hearing are inferior to those of other species of deer; but he certainly declines to make use of them. What can be more noisy than a line of from twenty to thirty elephants, with perhaps six or eight chattering sahibs in their howdahs, advancing down wind? Nevertheless, under such circumstances I have reached to within twenty yards of full-grown sambhur deer. Perhaps the largest sambhur doe I ever shot was also the first. It was at Dacca and within a few miles of

the city. A large and very noisy party were out, at the invitation of the Superintendent of Government Elephant-kheddas. Almost any gentleman who had a sporting turn of mind could get invitation to these parties, and would then find an elephant and a howdah provided for him at the meeting-place. I was not particularly on the *qui vive*; but I suddenly saw a head and two very lovely large black eyes looking at me, and as quickly murderously fired. The mahout and my next neighbour asked "What made you shoot?" I said "There is a large deer dead in that bush." And so there was; the ball had entered into her throat and passed out behind it through the spine. She was very large and very heavy, and it took several men and a deal of delay to hoist her on to the guddy. Generally the sambhur I killed were slain in some similar manner. A huge beast would rise with a bound and crash among the bushes, and if you were on the alert you could put a ball into him at a very short distance. If not quick, probably in two or three bounds the great stag would be lost to sight in the thick foliage of the tree-jungle; and if it was unlimited and unbroken forest, with no open spaces near, he might probably escape. Still if a sportsman cannot hit an animal as big as a horse at thirty or forty yards in a vital spot, he deserves to lose his venison.

Of course, if such a large animal is only wounded and not stopped, or likely to be immediately stopped, he may receive any amount of balls and not fall. I regarded it as butchery to fire at a gous at random at a long distance. Often one ball was sufficient; but even if one ball knocked him over it was always good policy to put in another at the back of the head or below the ear before he rose again, for many a wounded sambhur has been lost. Once we thought we had killed one with fine horns on the banks of the Bunsee river. Budderuddeen and two others were cutting his throat, when up he jumped, knocked one of the men over and bounded into thick gujali jungle. It was more than half an hour before we eventually bagged him, after several more shots; even then he would have escaped had not the jungle been in detached portions, which allowed of us taking up positions to prevent his escape.

The horns of the gous of Eastern Bengal, though short and heavy, are not to be compared in size with those of Central or Western India. The animal itself is apparently quite as large, if not larger. In Ceylon, I believe, this is the deer that goes by the name of the elk; and there, as a rule, his horns are less than those of Eastern Bengal. We used to consider the venison as coarse; but I have eaten the tongue and the marrow and made nice soup out of sambhur and occasionally have grilled a steak and approved of it. But as food for a large camp the slaughter of a fine sambhur becomes quite a treat; and when the mahouts and camp attendants are well fed they are contented, but when provisions are scarce, "grumpy" is no fit name for their tempers.

Gous-deer were numerous in all the Dacca forest-jungle, in the gujali and in the thick tree-forest, and in the heavy grass in swampy ground, and

they were to be found from the outskirts of the city all up the Bunsee on both banks, through the entire length of the Mymensing district till the Brahmapootra churs were reached, and then onward through Assam and Rungpore, and all along the base of the Himalayas in the Terais of Purneah. In Dacca now I hear they are scarce; and if the rail is made all along the line of the Bunsee river, *Cervus aristotelis* will probably soon disappear from these jungles, where they can be hunted. They will probably retreat to the Sylhet and Shooshung and Assam hills. These hills in the two first-named places are generally thorny and covered with unlimited spaces of jungle, where sport is difficult. The gous is common in these districts and extends through Tippera to Chittagong; but European gentlemen do not go to these thorny never-ending jungles for sport, and the deer are shot at their drinking-places by native shikarries.

Letter No. 52.

Deer over in other countries not always difficult to approach.—The Spotted Deer. Not common and only to be found in some districts. I kill some at Obhyah in Rajshahye and some fine Peacocks.—The Swamp-Deer. Its habitat. Great numbers driven into small dry and high spots in inundations in Sylhet. I kill several, but think the sport poor.—Deer as a rule not shot at if a Tiger is expected.—The Barking-Deer.—Remarks on Deer-shooting.—Antelope only now to be found in Purneah. Reasons why we did not shoot them there.—To ride and spear an Antelope is considered a great feat.

No kind of deer, except the spotted deer, which I met with in Eastern Bengal was difficult to approach. No care as to the direction of the wind or as to silence was necessary with respect to any of them; they regarded concealment in thick leafy or forest shelter or grass jungles as their security. In open plains, after the grass was burnt and only light patches remained, hog-deer would get up at a distance, and were what is called wild; but then they only ran to thicker cover, and if in this they could be cut off and beaten to an open point, they would often break across close to an elephant.

Even the red deer of Britain differs greatly in his cautiousness when the nature of the country differs. In the Scotch Highlands he is difficult to approach; but with the Devon and Somerset stag-hounds the old stag will often remain quiet though surrounded with hounds. I have known one harboured in gorse or furze-brake, where his horns were visible, and to lie still within a short distance of horsemen looking at the place, till the tufters came, and one almost jumped on to his back before he rose up.

The spotted deer is not met with in all the districts of Eastern Bengal.

It is common in the Soonderbunds, but is unknown in Chittagong, Tippera, Sylhet, Dacca, or Mymensing; it is found in the Rajshahye and Maldah districts. I never met with it in the lower Brahmapootra churs, but it may appear as you ascend the river; I have heard of it there, but other deer when young are sometimes spotted, and all sportsmen are not necessarily naturalists. The spotted deer is the most beautiful of the Bengal deer and carries long, thin, graceful horns.

I met with few; I have shot them in the Soonderbunds and in the Burrin of Rajshahye. They wander more into the open and are more wary than other Bengal deer. I went out in the early morning at Obhyah, where I so nearly bagged my first tiger, as related before, to look out for hog-hunting ground and to learn the country. I was mounted on a noisy unmanageable elephant, and in the Burrin I disturbed a deal of game, but did no good, and resolved to have an afternoon's wanderings about these nice jungles, and I went out prepared for spotted deer and peafowl, with a horse and his attendant and a gun-carrier. An hour or so before sunset I came on spotted deer, and approached them up wind carefully. They were feeding and sauntering about the glade-like opening, and, while watching some at a distance, a herd of seven or eight, mostly or all bucks, came out of some jungle close to me, and I knocked over a couple right and left; they did not see me; and after running a short distance they all stopped, turned, and gazed at a dying deer convulsively struggling on the ground. I had another smooth-bore in my hand, and regretted much that I had not brought a rifle; however, the distance was only about one hundred and twenty yards. I rested the Joe Manton on a tree, and aimed at the shoulder of the best buck, and aimed rather high. The ball struck the very place I wished, and the third lovely stag was laid low. After this dusk came on, and I heard the peacocks calling and saw them flying on to the high cotton-trees. I marked them with a binocular and stalked up to those which had the finest trains. I shot two with ball as they sat unsuspicious on the bare boughs; the trains were in splendid order, hardly an eye missing in either of them. I had some difficulty in finding my way home in the dark.

Spotted deer did not come much in my way in after years; the jungles where they were to be found in Backergunge were very distant from head-quarters and hard to get at. I never met with one when shooting in line from elephants. They were not common in Purneah, though they exist in the Purneah terai. I believe other sportsmen have killed them in Rungpore and Maldah. They are very numerous in the Cuttack jungles, and are more widely spread over India generally than any other deer.

The home of the swamp-deer is in the wide marshy plains known as the Howahs of Sylhet; from thence they extend all along Mymensing and Assam to the base of the Himalayas, and along the north of Rungpore and Purneah, and beyond the limits referred to in these letters. There are none

in Chittagong, Noakholly, or Dacca, or in the districts on the right bank of the Ganges below Rajmehal. They are said to inhabit the Backergunge Soonderbunds, and I have been shown horns from there. I gave an account of the death of one in a former letter, whose horns have been drawn; but these horns, which I still have, are abnormal, and I never met or saw any like them. I have a pair which belonged to a larger and, I believe, an older deer, shot in Sylhet, and these have the regular number of tines, which is almost invariably twelve. The animal is generally called "bārah singah," or twelve-horned.

Having heard much of these deer in the Sylhet Howahs I made a special point of visiting these places. Sylhet is a very damp district, and rain falls there much more than in the more western districts. These places have always much water spread about them, but for most part of the year animals managed to find sufficiently dry land to enable them to stray and secrete themselves in the various shrub and tree and grass jungles, which all get submerged in the inundations when the rains are at their height. For the few weeks when the waters are high, all the quadrupeds of these plains betake themselves to the teelahs, or small hilly mounds, where they can keep themselves from drowning, and at such times these places are crowded with game. It was to these teelahs that I was directed to go, and no easy matter was it to get there. I travelled in a boat. The elephants, shikarry, &c. had been sent ahead. I got on the elephants and had to traverse a deal of ground; progress was much impeded by the inundation, and the elephants were constantly guddy-deep in water and grass. I at last beat up one high ridge, but the grass was thin and short, and by the greatest ill-luck I missed bagging a magnificent tiger, which was roused by a sounder of hogs which went rattling and snorting away from the elephants. I put the rifle into its place in the howdah and sat down, when my attendant in the howdah touched me on the shoulder and pointed to the tiger, just walking into a deep, watery, low part of the ground; he swam out of sight in almost a minute, and I knew he was safe, so I went on. The next place I got to was a dry teelah covered with grass about six feet high; here there were only a few inches of water. I never could have believed that so many wild deer and animals could have been so crowded togther. Khyah partridges were rising and screaming at every step, and all around me I could see horns moving about; the grass was high enough to conceal the bodies of the swamp-deer, but I could see their horns. As soon as the first astonishment ceased, I began to consider which pair of horns was the finest, then getting rather close to the animal, and judging as to his neck and shoulder, I fired. In this way I soon had killed four magnificent bucks; but it was mere murderous slaughter, there was no sport, nor pursuit, nor pleasure in these proceedings. Four large deer were quite as much as I could dispose of in that hot weather, among the boatmen, mahouts, and attendants. I padded the stags and gave up the

pursuit of them, and thought I would make a bag of khyah partridges. These birds, all wet and with heavy plumage, flew slowly; in ten minutes I shot three brace; but the men on the elephants knocked over three birds with sticks in the same time. Neither could this be considered sport. I gave up and retired to my boat; the rain came down in a Sylhet deluge. This was my only day's shooting in the Sylhet Howahs.

Since muskets and guns have been sold to the natives by the stupid Government arrangements, which have supplied the natives quite needlessly with arms for no good whatever, deer and other animals are gradually being exterminated in these inundations. It was bad enough for the deer when the villagers only came in crowds in boats, armed with nets and spears and all manner of weapons and clubs. Great numbers were slain annually even then; but when in each boat there were two or three men armed with discarded regimental muskets or rifles, the deer and the hogs were killed by tens and twenties where formerly they fell only by twos and threes. I leave you to judge of the effect of the change on the game of the country.

When tiger-shooting, and the tiger has been padded, and there is little likelihood of another tiger that day, the rules for not shooting at inferior game till all chance of superior animals has vanished are relaxed; on the homeward beat the sportsmen shoot at everything, sometimes a snipe, sometimes a bear, sometimes a peacock. Some of the party, if the ground is well known, have probably ordered their horses to some neighbouring familiar place, and these take spears and endeavour to add a little pig-sticking to the day's sport; and of such a party, you may be sure, I was a keen member: but others remain in the howdah, and often have sport as valuable to them as a run and a fight with a four-year old boar is to us; and if such a party fall in with a fine antlered swamp-deer in a patch of heavy and damp grass, they too reach the tents rejoicing.

The only other deer regularly met with in the jungles of Eastern Bengal is the little "kakur," or barking-deer—a pretty little fellow, not nearly so large as a Scotch roedeer, with two very peculiar teeth attached loosely to his upper jaw. He is most generally shot with No. 5 shot, and requires very little harder hitting than a hare. His brown meat is savoury, and he is well worth a little trouble.

Usually I shot him when beating for jungle-fowl and peafowl &c. in dry tree or bush jungle. He is never found in the open plain like the hog-deer, nor does he leave his jungles to feed far off, as the spotted deer; and if ever he seeks deep heavy forest thicket, as the sambhur does, he is as secure as a needle in a haystack. At the foot of the hills he comes out, however, to nibble the dewy grass in the early morning with the jungle-fowls, and here is waited for and shot with a small-bore rifle. I have killed many in this way in Tippera, and the native shikarries slay a great number in this manner; for he is not very wary, and no very great skill is required to obtain a shot

at him. I never met with the barking-deer except in the districts to the eastward. The deer that "barks" in the Soonderbunds is the spotted deer; but the barking-deer is widely spread over India and known by several names, so I am not prepared to state that he is not to be found in Rajshahye, Maldah, and Dinagepore; I merely state that I did not meet with him except towards the eastern districts.

After all, deer-shooting from the howdah is rather tame sport: the difficulties of pursuit and chase are wanting; no art or study is required as in stalking a red deer in the Scottish Highlands, no skill in shooting such as even a snipe demands is required; there is the absence of the spice of danger which is always present in tiger-shooting. In hog-hunting there is skill and pace, hard riding, the contest for the first spear, the fight with its danger to horse and man, and then the blunt steady courage of the boar is wanting to the timid stag. For these reasons deer-shooting from the howdah had no charms at all for me if there was any chance of spearing a hog; and thus I directed many a party of deer-shooters, firing from the backs of my own elephants, for days, when I carried no weapon but a hog-spear and never pulled a trigger.

Antelope are not unknown in Eastern Bengal, but I never fired a shot at one. In very early days I went out with a party at Moorshedabad to see antelopes hunted with trained cheetahs or hunting-leopards. These belonged to the Nawab of Moorshedabad, and the country was some dry, shrubby, wild, uncultivated tract to the west of Berhampore. We saw antelopes, but could not get near enough to them to show them to the cheetahs. Whether antelopes still exist in that country I am unable to say: there are, however, some herds in the Purneah between the head station and the Ganges; these are inhabitants of the wild plains, managed by the indigo-planters, the best and most hospitable of men; these gentlemen opened their houses to the civilians and sportsmen of the district with grand hospitality. Their elephants, their coolies as beaters, their boats, and, above all, their services as preservers of game and providers of sport were lavishly given to us. In return, they asked us, the hog-hunters and sporting gentry of the head station, to spare their antelopes. The animal was getting scarcer, the herds lessening in numbers; Brahmins dote on roast antelope haunches, and in the high inundations the Hindoos murder them in every way, especially with the discarded army muskets and rifles, which may some day be used in agricultural disturbances, as contraband arms are in Connaught. Of course the Purneah sportsmen spared the antelopes, and though I met with them scores of times and admired their beautiful bounds, and rather coveted their ringed horns, I never fired a single shot at them.

About 1848–1850 there were antelope occasionally to be seen in the Kishnaghur district, but I believe they have been quite exterminated; in

Western Bengal, and, indeed, over nearly all India, they are still numerous, and most Indian sportsmen have killed them.

There is nothing harder in the way of riding than to spear a fairly ridden black buck; but the feat has been several times accomplished in Upper India, and, I believe, in Madras and Bombay. I do not think it has been fairly attempted in Eastern Bengal; but the Danish hero of the spear, well known to the Dinagepore and Rungpore sportsmen, must have tried it; and if it has been done he has done it.

Letter No. 53.

Game Birds in Bengal.—Partridges. The Black or Francolin. Common in many districts, but not in Tippera, Noakholly, or Chittagong.—My compound at Purneah.—The Khyah Partridge. Noisy and hard to flush more than once.—The Quail. Quail-years. Large bags made in those years.—Receipts for cooking Quails.—The Bengal Floriken. Common only in some districts; considered a prize and excellent on table. Handsome plumage.

Before attacking the delightful subject of wildfowl-shooting, which, for the most part, is restricted to the wide open plains and placid lagoons only to be found at long distances from the cutcherries, in which you will have to toil with your pen at least eleven days out of each fortnight, I must tell you a little about such birds as are really game, and ought to be easily procurable by any sportsman of Eastern Bengal who owns a breech-loader and thinks he ought to use it. I allude to partridges, quail, and floriken. Snipe were fully discussed in earlier letters.

There are only two kinds of partridges in Eastern Bengal—the black partridge, which is the francolin (*Francolinus vulgaris*) and known in Europe; and the khyah partridge, improperly though commonly called chickore (*Ortygornis gularis*). Whether the grey partridge, nearly allied to the khyah, ever comes into Western Moorshedabad I cannot positively state; it approaches to the west of the Hoogly, but I never shot it myself in the Eastern Bengal to which these letters are confined, so I shall not further refer to it.

The black partridge is a handsome game bird, and though generally he is very easy to knock over, even from a howdah, he affords very pleasant sport, and I have enjoyed a great many pleasant afternoons shooting blacks. Where black partridges abound, hog-deer, hares, hogs, snipe, &c. are sure to be found. My fondness for hog-hunting must have saved the lives of

thousands of black partridges; for I have been amongst them the whole long day, and for three days running, and never levelled a barrel at them. Their most peculiar and unmistakable call has pleased my ear as I started tiger-shooting or on some other sport every year of my Indian life; for they are generally spared when larger game may be looked for. In almost every district they are to be got, and wherever naturally growing grass-jungle exists, especially if corn and crops are cultivated anywhere near such grass, the black partridge may be found—that is, north and west of Tippera, Noakholly, and Chittagong. In these three districts I never heard the "Teeree-tee-teetur," so well known in the neighbouring districts from Dacca northwards and westwards.

The black partridge may be shot to dogs or to beaters, and if you are a tolerably good shot you will scarcely ever miss one, unless he comes down wind at a great pace. I generally shot them from the howdah and very few escaped: I have several times killed them with a ball out of a smooth-bore. The bird generally rises from twenty to twenty-five yards in front of the elephant and flies straight. A covey of blacks rising at once is never known, so you do not require to pick out a bird. The young ones, which I have often met with, do not rise in coveys. The plumage of the cock is most handsome.

The bird does not avoid cultivation nor the neighbourhood of villages; it is found close to Dacca and abounds in Mymensing: I never could see any reason why it was not to be seen in Tippera or Sylhet. At Purneah it used to come into my garden in the inundations; but I believe some were there all the year round. It was a wonderful place for zoology that garden of mine! At the bottom was a marsh and a considerable extent of deep water which was connected with a river; crocodiles bred in the holes near the water. There were snakes (venomous and the reverse), turtles, otters, and quantities of fish; the neophron vulture nested in the tall tāl-trees; kites, hawks, pigeons, doves, cuckoos of several kinds, and bulbuls nested within sight of the house, and in the garden I bagged my first little hornbill; the long white-tailed paradise flycatcher and numbers of interesting birds frequented the guava, orange-, and peach-trees; but of game birds I shot common and jack snipe, black partridge and quail, and several kinds of ducks. An ornithologist coming fresh from England and located for his first fortnight at the land-station of Purneah would have been busy from sunrise to sunset in procuring specimens and half the night in preserving them. Still I consider the base of the Tippera hills as still better ground for seeing a great variety of charming Indian birds. The black partridge is not a bird of much flavour in the dish.

To the man who has only shot black partridges the sudden bouncing whirr and scream of the khyah partridge out of the thick tall grass near the swamp is so disconcerting that many a one misses his khyah, though a larger bird

than the black. The khyah is not nearly so common as the black; they go in pairs in the dry weather and congregate in numbers in the rains; they are never found far from swampy ground or places that for a great part of the year are either under water or swampy; they perch habitually in bushes, black partridge only exceptionally: the khyah, too, is very noisy at times; but his scream is unmelodious and no pleasant memories are attached to it. In parts of Tippera it resorts to dense cane-brakes and bênt-jungles, and is at all times difficult to put up; but if put up and marked into a cane-brake, the khyah will rise no more—indeed in very thick grass-jungle it is not worth while to waste time in trying to get the birds up a second and a third time.

The black partridge affords the best sport of the two, and is found in much more accessible places. The khyah loves the heavy grass and rose-jungles, where you might expect tiger and buffaloes; and though black partridges are fond, like almost every known species of game, of rose-jungles, yet you will never find the khyah in the nice little thatching-grass patches and the mustard crops and flowery oil crop in which you can walk so easily and so agreeably knock over the black partridge, the hare, and the quail. The khyah is found in Purneah, and equally in Tippera and in every district between the two zillahs where heavy and damp jungle is to be found.

The quail is a bird which is most uncertain; for two or three years running you may hardly meet with a trace in the most eastern districts, but in the third or fourth year you will find them absolutely swarming, especially in February—you will kick them up under every bush in the garden and find the long rice-stubbles almost alive with quail. To the westward they are more regularly abundant; but even there I believe there are regular quail-years.

Very large bags of quail can be made in the quail-years by those who are disposed to take the trouble. I never tried to make one of these murderous slaughters, chiefly because the birds appeared in greatest numbers in the spring, and at that time hog-hunting, tiger-shooting, wildfowling, and every sport almost except snipe-shooting was at its best, and the poor little quail held out no inducement to me. I have put them up at nearly every step of the horse; I have struck at them at times with the hog-spear. In the afternoons I have gone out and shot between twenty and thirty brace; but there is little sport in the pursuit: the bird rises quite close and flies generally straight; some nice double shots are offered; but there is a sameness in the shooting, and with small charges of powder and No. 8 or No. 10 shot you can scarcely miss. I have no record of what other men shot; but, according to my memory, I have known two guns shoot more than eighty couple of quail in a forenoon on the plains of Parbuttia, while most of us were hunting hog.

Some men think quail a delicacy on the dish; to me it seemed somewhat dry and tasteless. I will give you some receipts for cooking it:—

This is Jerdon's pie:—"Take twelve quails and nicely pluck them, and two

pounds of beef-steak; cram a spoonful of pâte de foie gras inside each bird, and wrap it in a slice of thin bacon. Add a small tin of truffles, half a bottle of button-mushrooms, six hard-boiled eggs (each cut in half), condiments, sauces, 'selon le goût,' fill in with rich stock, cover with good crust, and bake slowly; and if your cook is a good one, the pie will be good."

Baron Brisse gives another receipt:—"Draw and singe your quails: peel some truffles and cut them into large dice; pound the quails' livers and the truffle-trimmings in a mortar, season with salt and white pepper, stir in a lump of butter, warm in a saucepan, and when cold stuff the birds with this force-meat and the chopped truffles: roast, and serve with Périgueux sauce."

If you want a simpler receipt, take mine:—Pluck and draw your quail; cut a piece of lemon the size of a dice and pepper it with cayenne pepper, and wrap the dice in a very thin slice of bacon. Have a saucepan of water well boiling; take it off the fire and drop the quail into the water, but do not put the saucepan again on the fire. Let the bird remain in the hot water three minutes; then take it out, insert the lemon wrapped in the bacon into the bird, and then fry it nicely in bread crumbs, and serve on a leaf.

Quails are caught in great numbers for fattening and for sale; they are taken in nets and traps, and I have seen them caught with bird-lime. The bird-catcher has a shield made of the grass and herbage where the quail are; and behind this he conceals himself, moving the shield forward as he chooses and sticking it upright in the ground. In the one hand he has some dry grass, which he squeezes with a regular motion, imitating exactly the noise of a cow chewing and feeding; with the other hand he works a long thin bamboo rod with a limed twig at the end, and so catches the birds.

There are several other kinds of quail beside the common grey quail to be found in the western parts; but quails generally are scarce towards the east of the country concerning which I write. The extremely pretty little bird called the blue quail (*Excalfactoria sinensis*) was common in the indigo-fields of Dacca and Mymensing. I am told there is not a factory now left in those districts. The rain-quail was present in Rajshahye; but I only killed these two birds in the pursuit of ornithology; they did not afford real sport.

The Bengal floriken, or florican, for there is no rule for the spelling of Indian zoological names (*Sypheotides bengalensis*), is a small bustard and a right glorious kind of game; very handsome and game-like in plumage; some think the best bird on table to be found in Bengal; rare enough to make sportsmen keen in pursuit, and at times cautious and wary. It fell to my lot to kill numbers of floriken yearly, except when stationed at Noakholly and Chittagong. At Dacca they were to be found in places I knew of; in Mymensing they were numerous, and on the Brahmapootra plains plentiful: but in Purneah, both north and south, they were exceedingly numerous; I have seen fourteen in the air at one time, and they breed in Purneah and stay there all the year.

In many places they are partial to burnt grass; and in such spots occasionally they may be found in Tippera. Some are most delicate eating; but I have tasted floriken which were coarse and strong.

Generally the bird rises unexpectedly before you when beating grass for hog-deer or hogs. Though large and heavily feathered, he is easily bagged, and of course, as his size is great, he is easy to hit. If wild and taking long circular flights, you can watch him, and when marked into a patch, get off the elephant and sneak round to some marked spot in front and let the elephants beat him up towards you. If you see him sauntering about the stalks of the burnt grass, you will not find him hard to stalk on foot. With a little care and trouble you should almost always obtain a shot at floriken. But there is no use in trying to exterminate them as Jerdon did in Purneah; he said he wanted a series and killed about forty, half a dozen would have answered his purpose as well.

The male is easily distinguished by his black and white plumage; the female's plumage is buff-yellow, barred most beautifully with black, and the inner part of the feathering of both sexes is rosy pink. I believe I once killed a specimen of the lesser floriken (*Sypheotides auritus*), the bird so well known in Madras; it was in Purneah and I have heard that other "likhs," as they call them, have been shot in that district.

Letter No. 54.

Wildfowl.—The sport with Wildfowl in India most excellent. Cheaply got: with some trouble to be enjoyed from nearly all districts. Best time for.—Obtain the good offices of Planters, Zemindars, and Villagers so as to have the land and waters kept undisturbed. —Sport more enjoyable than the wildfowling of England.—The Coolen.—Budderuddeen as a Shikarry after Wildfowl.—Difficulty in obtaining my first Coolen. How we bagged six at last in one morning.—The Sayrus.

The sport of hog-hunting takes the first rank among Indian field-sports. Tiger-shooting by many is considered as good, and snipe-shooting also takes a high place, but the ever-varying and exciting pursuit which comes under the wide-spreading term of wildfowl-shooting is most charming and most satisfactory. For this I always laid myself out and spared neither trouble nor expense. But, indeed, except for the trouble of going long distances in a short time, which is unavoidable if a hard-worked official really means to secure good sport, and but for the expense of boats and shikarries and a little money judiciously expended in keeping waters undisturbed for a few days, wildfowling costs but little. Nearly all my best was obtained through

the aid of those excellent fellows the indigo-planters. At the distant borders of nearly every district uncultivated and half-deserted areas of worthless ground and wide marsh and watery expanse are to be found; here in February and March the wild ducks and geese, the coolen and the plover, and innumerable waders of kinds dear either to the sportsman or the ornithologist, resort in flocks. If the landholders and gentlemen in authority, or of influence among the population of such places, will induce the fishermen and agriculturists to leave the wildfowl undisturbed in order that the Hakim or the Sahib may enjoy real good sport, you will find yourself making tremendous bags of web-footed or wading birds. You may render your visit agreeable in may ways. Wildfowl, and many heavy-bodied wading-birds, go a long way as food among the poorer natives; backsheesh and strong drink will keep many a bheel still and quiet; and the civilian resident at headquarters may, with hospitality and a little politeness and attention to the gentlemen and to the ladies of the distant factories, in some measure make a return for the sport which the planter so often preserves for the civilian.

But should the landholder, the planter, or the villagers dislike your advent, they can in the easiest manner destroy all your sport and take away all inducement for a visit next season. The grass may be burnt; hordes of fishermen with boats directed to fish the waters just on the days you want to shoot, and two or three native gunners firing in the moonlight nights when the birds are on the feed, and at about 10 A.M. when they congregate to rest in their usually undisturbed places, and perhaps discharging their guns just as you are stealthily nearing your best chance for a grand shot, will spoil all your expected fun. Believe me there is no surer way of getting good sport than by cultivating the goodwill of the planters, and zemindars, and villagers; and no more certain method of spoiling your own amusement than that of insisting on going contrary to their reasonable desires. As a stranger to a district you can know little, whereas the planter as a permanent resident, and aided by local knowledge of the game, the country, and its human as well as other occupants, must be fully acquainted with the state of the ground and the waters, the game and the crops, and the feeling of the people, and able to assist you materially or to thwart you most completely.

As a boy I delighted much in bagging a brace of wild ducks. I would wade in cold water, and rain, and mud for flappers, and would lay on the damp rocks at the sea-shore waiting for the flight of various wildfowl to the mouth of the burn, or spend hours with bent back and crouching gait in frost and snow to bag the wary curlew or let blaze into a crowded flight of golden plover. But all these delights were associated with bad weather, chilling east winds, long walks over bad ground, feet wretchedly cold, fingers benumbed till the trigger could scarce be felt, and weary trudges home in the dark. Compared with this the pursuit of wildfowl in Eastern Bengal

is luxury—no cold, generally no excessive heat, no long walks, an elephant or a horse to carry you, a boat to sit in; and then the tremendous bags to be got! not a couple or perhaps two-couple of ducks, but heads to be counted in scores, and so deliciously fat and tender on the platter! Wildfowl-shooting when birds are plentiful in Bengal is a most enjoyable and health-giving recreation; and fortunately it is to be procured by all English sportsmen who will really take the trouble to obtain it, and from every station to which I ever was appointed.

First I will begin with the tallest bird and about the most difficult to bring to bag without a duck-gun. The kooleen, or coolen (*Grus cinerea*), the common crane. Why common crane? I never saw or heard one in England or in Scotland. It is reported that King Edward had one hundred cranes on his table at once; and if so, cranes were probably common then; but among writers who did not care for ornithology the term crane may have been applied to herons and egrets. In parts of England a heronry is still termed a cranery. At any rate the king knew what was good, for a tender crane about Christmas, corn-fed, is a right good bird and fit for a king.

But before telling you more about coolen, I must let you know, without concealment, that most of my stalking of wildfowl was done either by Budderuddeen my shikarry or with his advice and aid. No better shikarry as regards all manner of wildfowl could serve any master. He delighted in this part of his business and had been brought up to it. I had to send him always to search for ground for hog-hunting and tiger-shooting; but wherever he went he never failed to inquire and observe as to the habits of all kinds of geese and ducks and waders in any new neighbourhood. He was lithe and active; in an instant he would be stripped to his lingootee. For any requisite time he would lie on his stomach in soft mud with his mouth just above it, or immerse himself in the coldest water, all but his head, or crane through thorns and bushes and grass, concealing himself as if he was no larger than a cat. He never seemed to get impatient. He would watch till I was tired of watching him through a binocular, till he could make certain of so many heads at one shot. His management of Bengalee cows was marvellous. He had a better hand on a cow's tail than Jem Mason had on a hunter's rein; both took their animals across wide bottoms in wonderful style. He had one peculiar art, he could drive several cows or oxen at once towards his game, and he did it slowly and steadily. At times I took great advantage of this, but very often Bengalee cattle would not allow a European near them; none seemed to mind him, though his treatment of their tails was barbarous. To crown all, he was the very best shot at a bird on the ground I ever saw, and a gun in his hands seemed to kill ten or twenty yards further than with any one else. But he never could fire a second barrel. I hardly got him to discharge the second barrel half a dozen times during his long service with me. His sight was nearly as good as mine with a binocular. He was truthful.

In my early days I had no duck-gun and all my sport was with ordinary smooth-bores, but in latter days I had both double-barrelled duck-gun and breech-loaders. When the duck-gun came into use, half the value of Budderuddeen's skill vanished, but he made some most tremendous long shots with that duck-gun, especially at geese. Such was my shikarry, my right hand at wildfowl and valued assistant at every species of shikar.

I knew the coolen well, and for years I coveted the prize; I had met with him when hog-hunting with the Calcutta Tent Club as far south as Diamond Harbour. I had heard his loud trumpet in the Maldah district when tiger-shooting with the judge. I had watched him with a glass when resting on the sand-banks in the Ganges, and admired his ash-coloured plumage and the scarlet about his head; but it was not till the second year of my time at Noakholly that I actually shot them.

I told Budderuddeen that I must shoot them, and he at once offered to get any number with tame buffaloes; but the cattle would not let me go near them. Neither after seeing our elephants and party would coolen let me stalk them. There were several nullahs with high banks near Hingootea, and I observed that at morning and evening the coolen came to feed in the rice-fields and flew low across these nullahs. I told Budderuddeen to select a spot for concealment, and I would go there before daybreak and wait for them; accordingly, after a day's hog-hunting, I rose from my bed at 3 A.M., leaving my companions fast asleep, and started on two elephants, taking three double guns and large shot. It was dark when we reached the spot; the elephants were sent off for more than a mile; the concealment under an overhanging bank was perfect, and the shikarry declared that the birds would come almost within arm's length; his only counsel was, "Let a score pass over before you rise; you will then be in the middle of them and they will fly in all directions." We cocked the three guns and waited.

As soon as the first streak of sunrise tinged the east, and while the stars were bright, we heard the loud trumpetings of the flocks of birds which had been sleeping securely on the sand-banks in the deep Megna; and before very long we knew they were coming. I heard the flap of many heavy wings; I actually felt the wind from the pinions: a lot of these very large birds passed right over our place of ambush; then we rose up. I knocked over two at about fifteen yards, and then took up the second gun and floored one more and mortally wounded a fourth, and Budderuddeen shot the only coolen he ever killed flying in his life. This was splendid. The birds took some more killing; Budderuddeen "hallal-kur'd" them in the proper Mahommedan fashion, and we went after the wounded bird, which was done for and easily despatched.

We hid the birds and waited for more, but no more came; this the first flock clearly communicated with the other flocks, and all seemed disconcerted and wild. We travelled along the bottom of the nullah for miles, taking such

observations as we could with safety; and by dint of careful stalking I got another double shot at some coolen feeding, and bagged one. Six coolens at last! We signalled for the elephants, picked up the beautiful wild birds, and got back to the tents in time for breakfast.

When once the charm was broken, I bagged coolen repeatedly. A very few days after, when standing up in my boat watching for any bird that might come, as we rapidly rounded a corner of the small river, above which was high jungle, I came right into the leaders of a flock of coolen and fired, killing one; the shot No. 5 was too small, or I might have bagged two. Sometimes I stalked them when Budderuddeen could secure an amiable cow, and once or twice I shot them with a rifle; one way and another I got two or three every year.

There are many bird-catchers who can snare these birds. I have known them taken in many districts and have bought them near Furreedpore. Coolen apparently visit the districts near the Megna and Brahmapootra about harvest-time and remain till the end of March. I never saw them feeding in water. They eat rice, and I have known them get the credit of eating melons and gourds.

The sternum of a coolen is curious; the windpipe passes through it in folds; doubtless this is connected with the resounding note so well known in Bengal.

There is a larger crane in Bengal, the sayrus. This very beautiful bird I never shot at; the natives prize it as a pet and do not like it to be killed; I have watched its fantastic dances and bowings with a glass, and never desired to kill such a graceful harmless creature. A Brahmin of Bhowal asked me to spare them, and offered me two alive if I liked to have them. He also said misfortune would befall any one who killed a sayrus. A by-stander remarked that the collector sahib of Dacca had killed one a few seasons before. "Yes," said the Brahmin, "and did not his wife die of cholera soon afterwards?"

There is a crane very much like the coolen, but a little smaller, called "karkurra" (*Anthropoides virgo*), the demoiselle crane. These are common in Western India, and I believe I have seen them near the Brahmapootra; but of this I am not positive.

Letter No. 55.

Various large Waders useful as food for native attendants.—Curlews and sport with them.—Bitterns.—The Heron tribe.—Bird-catchers.—Kalims.—The Khora.—Cotton-Teal and Whistling-Teal.—Godwits and Plover, and various birds.—Rafts: easily made as a makeshift.

At times I shot various species of storks and ibises: perhaps these can hardly be considered game or the killing of them sport; but their large bodies afford a treat to the Hindoo, and when their throats have been cut in the orthodox manner they are prized by the Mahommedan family. By gifts of food of this sort I won goodwill, and when the villagers, the fishermen, and even the gunners found that they received not only remuneration, but a great portion of the game I killed, they were much more willing to let me kill it, and would even take trouble to keep birds undisturbed, and would come long distances to tell me that rare birds had come to the jheel or that ducks were numerous.

In this way I shot:—the beef-steak bird; the manikjor (*Episcopus melanopelargus*); the pelican ibis, which has the most lovely rosy plumes, in appearance and still more in texture, and yet, taken as a whole, the bird is ugly; the shell ibis, or snail-drawer, is a plain bird, but natives value it; the warty ibis, or king curlew; the glossy ibis, occasionally found in Britain; and numbers of herons of different sizes and colours. Probably when better game is scarce and till you become acquainted with these birds, and certainly if you are at all an ornithologist, the pursuit of them will take up some of your time in your opening seasons.

The wild and wary curlew was always shot by me—that is, when I could get a shot at him. Once when shooting golden plover on the wide open plains near the Megna, a large flock of curlews came whistling and screaming towards me (a most extraordinary thing for such birds to do), and as I put up my gun to shoot, a magnificent falcon rose from the rear of the flock. She was the cause of this unusual action. I let fly with No. 8 shot; the falcon did not fall; I watched it with a binocular, for I had never seen so fine a hawk. It sat down on an open plain; I loaded with No. 5 shot and did my best to stalk within shot; but the bird rose wild, and I fired at nearly sixty yards distance; again I marked the bird, and stalked up, and picked it up dead. It was a large peregrine falcon, a female, or possibly it might have been a shaheen and not a bhyri, for it was large and dark. Next day I shot a small old male peregrine in a tree. The pair were preserved and sent to England.

I got curlews near all the large rivers; they were very numerous at Backergunge. We tried all manner of schemes to circumvent them. I shot some by the following:—There were reaches of the river with muddy shores where the birds used to feed, and near these were dense jungles of high hoogla. I used to be set on shore and conceal myself just round the corner

at the mouth of a small stream running into the larger river. The boat then took a long circuit, proceeded up the other bank, crossed, and came down towards me; the curlews would get up warily, scream, and fly, and when they reached the small stream, turn and fly up it, thus often giving me very nice shots. I always regarded a curlew as a prize, and yet they were not good enough for table. In every country the curlew is a suspicious wary bird. If you can get a cow quiet enough for the purpose, you may get as many with her aid as a stalking-horse as in any other way.

The bittern has always been considered a game bird. They are not common; I only came on them at times and by chance. Every season I shot one or two in the rice-fields of Noakholly when snipe-shooting; once I met with a number at Purneah and saw seven on the wing at once. Some friends of mine considered them well worth shooting.

The heron tribe is well represented all over Bengal, and especially in Tippera and Noakholly.

I have shot the snowy, large, and small egrets for their plumes; these are only to be got in the rains. As I was riding, about sunset at the end of August, along the raised road in Tippera, on the look out for snipe, which are generally on the move at that time and so betray their feeding-grounds, I saw a number of egrets on a large cotton-tree and was admiring their snow-white plumage as it shone in the rays of the setting sun, when one of the birds apparently had a fit and fell backwards. Well, why should not a bird have a fit? But after a little another egret had a fit; this was too much, so I descended from the embankment, got through the water, and rode to the tree. I found a native bird-catcher pressing his body against the tree and concealed by the buttresses for which the cotton-tree is peculiar. He was catching the egrets with bird-lime. He had a set of long bamboos neatly fitting into each other, at the top was the limed twig; he fixed bamboo upon bamboo till he reached up to the birds and touched them with the twig; their wings became stuck to this and then they fell. He had several of these birds alive in a bag.

The common heron and the purple heron were sometimes shot for their plumes or for food for attendants, and so also was the night-heron. The natives asked me to try this bird; but I said I did not like it, it tasted strong and fishy. "Yes," said one, "such a nice flavour of fish"!

There was another bird which gave us sport at times: the "kalim," or purple gallinule or, as Jerdon calls it, purple coot. The plumage is various shades of blue, a horny casque on the head and long legs and feet are red.

The first time I saw these birds they flew into bushes growing in water; we resolved to beat them out with the boys, who are almost amphibious. I fastened two canoes together, because it was impossible to stand or sit steadily in one, they were merely hollowed out palm trees; but my companion, who was famous in his skiff in England, despised the idea of two canoes and

would only have one. Out came the blue birds over our heads, blaze went the shots, over went my friend, guns and all, and it took us nearly two hours to fish up the guns and dry them and make them ready for sport.

As the rice-crop ripens these birds are very destructive at the base of the Tippera hills. I have even been asked for remission of revenue on account of the damage done by them. In one afternoon the collector and I killed a hundred. They are as large as a partridge and tender and good to eat.

We always had a day or two's shooting in these rice-fields in the middle of the rains when no other sport was going on. We used to shoot these kalims and also Chinese water-pheasants (*Chirurgus hydrophasianus*), a beautiful water-bird with long tail, like a jungle-fowl, and graceful appearance. There was also the watercock (*Gallicrex*), the "khora" of the natives, a game bird to shoot, but valued for catching other khoras. The eggs are taken and put into the half of a cocoanut-shell lined with cotton; this is bound over a man's stomach and so the bird is hatched out. It is brought up tame and taken into the high rice, where it calls with an extraordinary sound, more like the bellow of a bull than the note of a bird. The wild males answer and bellow in return; when they come near, the tame bird is let loose and runs through the thick rice till it meets its adversary; both birds then fight and entangle each other in their long claws, and the native then catches both together and places the tame bird again in his cage to call another. A really good khora is a very valuable bird.

Two kinds of ducks are to be found in these rice-fields at this time of the year—the beautiful little pigmy goose, called by Europeans the cotton-teal (*Nettapus*), and the whistling-teal. Neither of these are regarded exactly as game; but they are about as good as most other ducks, and I fancy it is because they are tame and come near houses that they are spared.

The little cotton-teal builds in walls and ruins and even in factory chimneys, and the whistling-teal builds in trees. Neither of these sites are supposed to be places for the nests of the duck tribe; I have, however, taken the eggs of both species. An afternoon in the rains, when you can get a fine one, spent in a boat in the Tippera rice-fields when the water is from two to two and a half feet deep where the crop grows, will give you a deal of pleasure; your guns will be hot with firing, your bag will be exceedingly heavy; the victims are valued greatly by the natives, and the kalims are very destructive to the crops.

When the water dries off these wide plains and there is nothing left but long damp rice-stubble, which falls flat on the ground, large flocks of golden plover, and sometimes larger flocks of godwits, visit these places. When you hear from your ever-watchful shikarry that the plover have come, go after them at once; they are fine wild birds, but I never could learn their habits, nor know exactly when they would come or how long they might be found. Sometimes they are fairly tame, at others exceedingly wild. I was very fond

of shooting them and used to stalk them, getting Budderuddeen to guide a cow or a buffalo by the tail, or sometimes to use two cows with an improvised plough. Now and then I would get a rare pot-shot and kill about a score at the double discharge. There were a few places near Dacca where almost yearly I killed numbers of godwits: the arrival of the birds was reported and I generally got an afternoon at them; next day they were gone and I could form no calculation as to when the next crowded flight might be reported to me.

Roaming about the wide and little frequented sandy, muddy, and marshy lands, and the jheels constantly to be found a little inland from the mouths and junctions of the numerous rivers of Eastern Bengal, as they flow towards the Ganges, the Megna, and the sea—more in pursuit of ornithology than for orthodox sport—I used to meet with rare or curious birds, such as the avocet, the spoonbill, and the pratincoles. Sea-eagles, ospreys, and falcons attracted attention; and when following these birds I generally found out localities to which geese and ducks, which everybody regards as legitimate objects of sport, resorted. Miscellaneous wildfowling was then set aside and serious operations planned against Anatidæ.

Once I took to building punts to traverse the shallow lagoons, and my friend D., the planter, made two or three, but we found them of little use. We never could transport them to the right place; their cost was money thrown away. We neither of us then had duck-guns; these are quite indispensable—that is, without them you can make no really large bags; but generally fishing-boats, or canoes made of hollowed out palm trees, two tied together, will answer all purposes. If, however, you come to a piece of water covered with wildfowl, and no boat or canoe is to be got, you can manufacture in less than half an hour two rafts, from which you will be able to fire away nearly as well as from a boat.

Everywhere in Eastern Bengal there are plantain trees and bamboos. Here you have all that is necessary for making the raft: cut a few plantain trees, place them together in a triangular form, and pin them together with pieces of split bamboo; cut also a seat or two out of the plantain tree. Each raft will carry two men. In the first you will go, seated on your plantain stump; one attendant will pole you along with a bamboo pole, and the two men on the second raft will secure the game. In this way I have several times worked up waters that I had not known of and where boats and canoes were not handy. Had I known of this dodge in earlier days I might have killed great quantities of wildfowl at which I could never get a shot; and in this way also I have passed over deep areas of water across which I could not otherwise have gone. I recommend this very simple arrangement to your consideration, and only wish I had known of it in the first years of my sporting experience, whether in the neighbourhood of Calcutta or in distant Tippera. At Mymensing I worked it hard.

Letter No. 56.

Rupooshdee.—Management of the tenantry.—My first Indian Goose.—Goose-shooting. Budderuddeen excelled at this sport.—Different kinds of Geese.—Duck-shooting. No large bags without a good Duck-gun. For the first ten years I had none, then I order one to be made.—Duck-gun described.—Prepare everything for sport beforehand.—How to work the sport.—Avoid one particular day.—Sport in the Maldah district.—Do not let guns go in separate boats.—When to fire the Duck-gun.—The cripple-chase.—Send attendants to mark other flocks while you pick up the slain.

When young in the Bengal Civil Service I was appointed to superintend the measurement and settlement of a large government property situated in a desolate part of Tippera, where I was to be located in tents more than twenty miles from any christian friend (at least, as far as I then knew), and among natives reported to be hostile, unwilling to pay any rent or acknowledge any landlord. I found my tents pitched at the head of a kind of lake about two miles long, and in places nearly half a mile broad; the edges were thickly lined with rushes and flags, and many fishermen toiled in the waters.

In this estate, called Rupooshdee, I for the first time regularly worked at the pursuit of wildfowling. I had plenty to do and a large staff of employees—besides a deal of work on paper—deciding titles to land and rents, rent disputes and quarrels for possession, assessments and valuations of all sorts of property. I had to test every acre almost of measurement, and to settle the boundaries of every holding and tenure great or small. I used as a rule to sit in office all the morning; and in the afternoon, with the aid of two riding-horses, to gallop to parties operating on the land at a distance from my tents, and while doing this to combine as much shooting as I could with business.

The first thing was to map out the estate roughly, and then when the position of the lands, villages, jungles, and watery places was defined, to apportion out the work and to arrange for my attendants with guns and boats. Budderuddeen was not with me in those days, luckily for the wildfowl. At first there were no ducks or geese—the time for their arrival was just coming on—but snipe abounded. The first time I went out I beat some thrashing-grass for a fine wild cat. This enraged the owner; he would have no revenue sahib in his grass—so that night he burnt it all!! But I had a talk with him and showed him that he had lost the value of the grass and done me no harm; that I came to arrange things justly on the part of a paternal government. He had grievances; I listened to these and attended to them; by degrees I won him over and all the villagers.

At a former settlement all the inhabitants had been forced to pay a native Deputy Collector, and the settlement of the estate had been made favourable only to those who paid highest. Before long each tenant on the estate almost was engaged in looking out for ducks, geese, and game for me;

and one at last brought me a black-and-white pig, thinking it better that I should get a tender one without trouble, rather than toil all day in the jungle to kill huge tough wild boars !! So on the whole I greatly enjoyed my three months at Chur Rupooshdee.

I had no duck-gun, and considered my first wild goose a great catch. It happened thus : I was returning to the tents, I had bagged twelve couple of snipe, the sun was below the horizon, when I saw a flock of about fifty geese flying low. They settled in a piece of water surrounded with reeds. I got off the horse and arranged to stalk them; when I got to the reeds I found I was very far from the birds, so I had to wade, and I waded and waded very slowly and quietly till I could only keep the water out of the level barrels. The geese were nearly sixty yards off and their heads were up, though they could not make me out among the reeds. I had to fire at that distance : one pellet of shot divided a goose's windpipe, and my first Indian goose floated dying on the water. The attendant then came, stripped, and swam in and brought out what was either a pink-footed goose or a grey-lag goose. At the time I thought it was a pink-footed goose, and that all the geese except the bar-headed ones which I killed at Rupooshdee were pink-footed. I knew little of ornithology at the time, and I have since been told by Jerdon that pink-footed geese are rare. However, it was the first of a goodly number of geese to fall to my gun. It was a handsome bird and was excellent when roasted. In after days with a duck-gun I killed numbers yearly; and as for Budderuddeen's performances with that gun at geese on sandy or muddy flats where I could not get near them ! I never should have credited them unless I had seen them, and once at a tremendous long distance he bagged five geese at one shot.

Goose-shooting came by luck. If flocks were seen flying about we endeavoured to mark them. I seldom shot them in the water. Generally about 8 or 9 A.M. they would feed in the stubbles; then if I could get a quiet cow or buffalo they were to be stalked (or without a cow if the nature of the ground admitted of a stalk), or sometimes an attempt was made to drive them over me. Sometimes I tried to make a stalking-cow of my Arab horse, seldom successfully. Sometimes I made a turban and put on a native cloth; but this, too, seldom answered. At times I had to leave it to Budderuddeen, and could only look on through a binocular.

But it was quite a pleasure to see this man stalk wild geese. Of course he was stripped to his lingootee. When geese were feeding in rice-stubble left to be burnt, he was certain to get as near as he wished. He used to vanish from my sight altogether if the stalks of the stubble or if the grass was about nine inches high. If necessary he made a sort of small screen of the stubble or grass, which he pushed before him. If the wind was high the grass he held as a screen was always waving. He dragged the duck-gun behind him somehow as he squirmed like an eel over the mud, or like a

snake in the grass. He knew exactly when geese were alarmed and about to fly; and very often when I thought he was quite within shot he would wait and shift his position so as to get nearer, or to get more heads in a row. If there was no stubble and no grass, nothing but bare sand, he seemed to find out gutters or trenches in the sand and to make himself surprisingly invisible. At last I would see a flash, and two or more large grey birds flopping on the sand, and then hear the loud bang.

The barred-headed goose is the commonest at any rate on the banks of the rivers near the junction of the Ganges and Brahmapootra, and is always to be met with there in the cold season and far into the spring, sometimes in considerable numbers and sometimes in small parties or singly. It is not particularly wary, and I generally stalked a number myself every season. Now and then, if the sands or mudbanks were bare, I had to make the business over to Budderuddeen.

The grey-lag goose is, I suppose, the other goose commonly met with. He, I think, goes much more inland than the first goose. The early mornings in Bengal are very often foggy, and I used to hear these birds settling down to feed in the rice-stubbles in the fog. They are wary in foggy weather; but at the same time if you know the ground you can make crafty arrangements under the curtain of mist, and wait till it clears off, which it generally does at a fixed time. If you are patient and know of a hiding-place, and have a good shikarry to work them, you may get these geese towards you or over you. They are always in large parties. When once fired at and driven away they do not return to the same neighbourhood; but the barred-headed goose, or others of the same kind, may be found on the same churs several mornings running.

The nookta goose, which has a peculiar knob on his bill, is a different bird in appearance; some call it a duck. In coloration and appearance it is like a huge cotton-teal or *Nettapus*. I only shot these birds a few times at the junction of the Boorigunga or Dacca river with the Megna. In this country also I got avocets; I never killed one elsewhere, though I have seen them.

I now come to duck-shooting. I always pursued this branch of Indian sport with ardour; but for the first ten years, when armed only with small-bores, a few birds contented me; and for the most part the large flocks kept out of reach. However, I had a day's sport with Dr. Jerdon in Purneah; he had a double-barrelled duck-gun, and on that day the bag was tremendous and very varied. He commenced the slaughter by killing a number of pelicans at between ninety and a hundred yards distance; then he killed a sayrus crane also at a great distance, and afterwards when we were in boats and got among the bluewings, he cut them down in long strings. So with his assistance and the Calcutta gunmaker's we planned a double-barrelled duck-gun, and in a few months it was made for me in England and sent out.

This gun was a muzzle-loader, bore No. 8, with long barrels; it was not

nearly so heavy as those duck-guns I see, shorter in the barrels but broader at the breech, which are now recommended by Birmingham makers. The rib was sunk, and there was no ramrod attached. I used a great heavy loading-rod and tight-fitting wads. The usual charge was six drams of coarse powder and only two ounces of B.B. shot, or one of Eley's green cartridges with the same amount of shot. I once shot a brace of snipe with the gun, so it was handy; it, however, kicked considerably, and would cause the head to ache after many discharges.

There are so many good districts for duck-shooting that I can hardly say which is the best: in none will you get it without trouble or without going long distances. You must get some one to show you the waters at first; in my case it was invariably the planters who introduced me to my best sport. You must make all your preparations beforehand—have your large boats and your little boats, your morahs or stools to sit on, your landing-nets to pick up the birds, and your arrangements for watching the birds at different jheels all cut and dry before you start.

The birds will fly in thousands straight away to a distant jheel. There your second boats and attendants should be concealed and on the look-out. After you have disposed of your first flock, you should at once start by the quickest route to your second or third water; it may be you can ride across or you may go on an elephant or you may walk. If your waters are very extensive you may go on in the boat you have already used. Anyhow, to make a good bag and enjoy a whole day's sport, you must plan the campaign carefully beforehand, or the fun will soon be over.

There is a day in the spring when the sport of duck-shooting should be at its best, when all ducks are on the waters, and yet you will get no sport. It is a Hindoo holiday. To my shame I forget the name—it is about the last day of the month Phālgoon; but on that day every man and boy of the agricultural or fishing class, Hindoo or Mahommedan, every girl under ten and every woman above forty-five goes into the shallow waters and jheels and muddy and reedy places to fish with what is called a "toppa," a kind of bamboo cage without a bottom. There is no place except deep water where a web-footed bird could swim that is not disturbed for the whole of this holiday. The Europeans all take advantage of this day; there is no government office open; but on it you should go hog-hunting or tiger-shooting (both sports are then at their best). The ducks must have a day or two to settle and congregate together again.

The first time I came on Bengal ducks in their thousands was when tiger-shooting in Maldah. There was a place near an indigo factory from which we shot to which ducks came about sunset, and we waited for them; suddenly they seemed to arrive from all quarters at once: as you stood concealed in the reeds and bushes they would come plumping into the water close beside you and making it splash high in air—numbers of different sorts with dif-

ferent sounds and cries. But there was no time to pick and choose; we used to load and fire, and look to the different sorts and species afterwards. The light soon faded; there was no twilight; the sport did not last long. Everybody had a bang at the wildfowl; every mahout and horse-keeper seemed to get hold of a weapon and to kill ducks. Early in the morning we had another turn at them, but did not commit slaughter as at sunset. Soon after 8 A.M. every bird almost had vanished.

I have thought that at this place I saw both pink-headed ducks and marbled teal. I never visited the place again. Pink-headed duck I afterwards shot in numbers in the neighbouring jheels of Purneah; but the marbled teal I never met with again.

The bird that is shot in greatest numbers is the blue-winged teal, the same as the garganey. This bird swarms in the spring in all waters where duck-shooting is to be got. I found it in the largest flocks I should say between Furreedpore and Dacca, on the sand-banks on the large rivers, and in the bheels of Jessore and Purneah.

As soon as I was initiated into the sport I worked it with might and main, and reduced it as far as I could to a system. The first thing was to know the waters, and the next was to keep them undisturbed. I have several times pointed out how this was to be done. We will suppose the waters to have been undisturbed by a shot for two days, and that the boats and men and preparations have been duly arranged and placed, and that two or three of us start for the sport. You must all keep in the same boat, or, if in canoes, you must keep together. Do not think of separating, else the invariable result will be that just as you are about to get the best shot of the season, when the wild ducks are half asleep and unsuspecting, and all so crowded together that you can scarcely see a foot of water among half an acre of ducks, suddenly off goes a shot from the other boat, and your sport for that turn is spoilt.

No, you must keep together. You will approach as craftily as you can—dropping down stream if there is a stream, poleing (not rowing) if the water is deep; if it is shallow a man bending low and pushing as he silently walks behind. You and your companion will be lying in the front of the boat, with your two double-barrelled small-bores cocked, loaded in the ordinary manner with No. 5 shot. As you approach, some outside birds will rise and fly a few yards more into the body of the flock. You must exercise your judgment as to the exact time when you consider you can get no nearer, and then at a signal fire the four barrels. Without one instant's delay one of the party should rise and cut two long lanes right through the thickest of the flock as they are rising from the water with the duck-gun.

The water will now be covered with dead and wounded birds. You must lose no time: at once load your small-bores, and begin the cripple-chase; shoot every bird that sits with his head up or looks lively again—do not for

a moment think of trying to catch him till you have shot him again. Most of the wounded birds sit stupefied for a little time; in a few minutes they recover sufficiently to dive and give trouble. The firing will be hot; of course you will blaze at all swimming away as well as those with their heads up. The attendants should pick up the birds with landing-nets; this is a much easier and quicker method than grabbing at them with the hand. One man managing a canoe behind with another man using a landing net, in addition to a man with a similar arrangement in your own boat, will soon place most of the birds on board.

While all this is going on your other attendants will have marked where the enormous numbers of ducks have congregated again, and you will plan a second attack.

The above is a fair sketch of the arrangements I tried to carry out in all the districts in which I got really good duck-shooting out of boats; and we used to shoot from thirty to sixty or more couples of birds in the day—enough to send to all friends within reach, to satisfy your own wants, and to feed all the attendants and boatmen.

Letter No. 57.

Blue-winged Teal most numerous.—After disturbing the large flocks, go after small parties and different kinds of Ducks.—The Grey Duck.—The Pintail and others.—The Pink-headed Duck only in Purneah.—The Brahminy Duck.—Native Wildfowl-catchers.

By far the greater number of ducks that made up these large bags were the blue-winged teal. These birds are always in flocks; some tolerable-sized flocks may be seen as early as the end of October, but I have never gone after them at that time of the year. In January and February they appear to be most numerous, and then they fly about in thousands. They are restless in the early morning, but after 10 A.M. they congregate and crowd closely together in their favourite spots; these may be on the still waters of the jheels or bheels, of which there are so many in Purneah and Jessore, or they may be on the shallow expanses of river-water among the sands and mud-banks in the centre of the large rivers. Such capital shooting-waters may be found about the Ganges and Megna; the ducks abound, especially in February, all the way from Furreedpore to the mouth of the Dacca river. South of this I have not met the blue-winged teal in such great quantities. I never shot any on the Noakholly churs. In Tippera they are found in the Sylhet and Dacca direction, and small flocks visit the marshes near the eastern hills. To a

person unaccustomed to Bengal duck-shooting at its best their numbers are quite astounding; the air seems darkened when the flocks get up, and the rushing sound of their wings can be heard for a great distance.

After the flocks have been fired at three or four times they will probably disappear for some time. If you are shooting on the inland waters you can then go round and about the edges and corners, sneaking past the high reeds and rushes, and picking up various kinds of ducks. The red-crested pochard is considered a prize, and you may shoot a few. The grey duck or spotted duck is the largest and best of the birds that reside all the year round in Bengal and breed there; and the greater number of species to be got in England are also found in Bengal. The regular wild duck or mallard I never met with. The shoveller is common, and when the planters told me that mallards were to be got I always found that shovellers were meant. The shoveller is the worst duck on table that I know, not nearly so good as the whistling-teal or the cotton-teal; consequently I never bothered myself about shovellers.

The grey duck or spotted-billed duck (*Anas pœcilorhyncha*) is a splendid bird, common all over Eastern Bengal in suitable places, never very numerous like the blue-winged teal, but often in parties of from ten to twenty. It frequents all the nice pools and jheels near the hog-hunting and deer-shooting grounds, and used to breed near the indigo cultivation and, in some places, in high rice-crops. It is not very shy, and, when hog-hunting, if a small flock of grey ducks was put up it was generally usual to stop the line of elephants and let those who were so disposed make a quiet attack on the delicious bird. In arranging for a day's shooting at many of those jheels which have deep water in the middle and rushes at the side and muddy reedy margins outside the reeds, we used to work the grey ducks, pintails, &c. with canoes or rafts in the water, till we had driven them all away for the time. In this way too we often procured rare ornithological specimens. After this we would leave the canoes and take to snipe-shooting in the short grass at the very edge of the bheel; and in this way the whole forenoon from 6 A.M. till 1 P.M. was often spent.

Towards sunset again such places would be visited by ducks of different sorts and some pretty flight-shooting could be got. This is the style of duck-shooting that most Bengal sportsmen are familiar with; they take it as they come across it, and seldom take the trouble to lay themselves out for regular and systematic sport at ducks only, such as I have described with reference to blue-winged teal.

Considering the really magnificent duck-shooting which is to be got in so many districts, and the ease and luxury with which it may be worked, it is extraordinary how few sportsmen take pains to secure it. There is a place between Purneah and Maldah called Pakydhur-bheel, or the place of birds, where I shot nine kinds of ducks in one forenoon. The planter who first

took me to this place, which he regarded as the best shooting-water in Bengal, told me that no civilian or military gentleman from headquarters had visited the spot for five years. I know I should never have missed going there at least three times each season, cost what trouble it might. No sport to me with shot-guns (among these I include the duck-gun) was ever so satisfactory. Except the trouble of getting to the place there was no drawback whatever. We shot all day, and fired away quantities of ammunition, having occasionally to clean the guns; and all this without wetting one's self at all or undergoing any excessive fatigue. This too is a sport which is sure to last your time. Most of the ducks are migratory, and visit Bengal only in the end of the cold season. Nothing in the way of preservation is needed; all that is necessary is to keep the water quiet before you go to it and to stop any native shikarries from shooting.

Next to the grey duck the pintail duck is about the best both in size and flavour. These ducks are fairly common in rather small parties; they are to be shot both in the jheels and on the banks of the small rivers, and they associate with the blue-winged teal on the river sand-banks. When marked down they are always made the object of pursuit, and are not very difficult to approach; I never knew them to go about in pairs or singly.

Wigeon are not plentiful, and I never met large flocks; but I often got one or two when seeking for odds and ends after the large flocks of teal had been driven off. As the birds which have been disturbed by the platoon-firing in the cripple-chase begin again to settle down in their own separate parties you will probably watch them with a binocular, and you will see grey duck and pintails, wigeon and red-crested pochards, gadwalls and shovellers, flying round the jheel and settling in different places. Some of these you may covet more than others, or some may be in larger parties; you will take your choice and proceed accordingly; but be careful not to separate and go on different beats, for all sport will generally be spoilt if you do.

The pink-headed duck is a rarity and prize; I shot numbers in Purneah because I made them a special study, and I introduced Jerdon to the first pair he ever handled in the flesh. I was resting for the night, when travelling slowly with my goods and chattels towards the head station of Purneah, at a small staging bungalow; before sunrise next morning I was standing, wearing only nightshirt and pyjamehs, in the doorway watching two floriken, when a party of dark-looking ducks, with rosy-pink feathers under their wings, alighted in a tank close by: I seized my gun and went after them; as I was without anything on my head or my feet, I easily got close to them in the sedges and shot a pair of ducks quite unknown to me. These were pink-headed ducks (*Anas caryophyllacea*). I never met with them save in Purneah and the neighbouring parts of Maldah: they are not particularly good to eat, but they are regular ducks exactly of the Mallard type. I suppose these were the rarest ducks I ever shot; they are resident in Purneah all the year

and breed in the grass-jungles. The grey duck, the whistling-teal, and the cotton-teal are also resident throughout the year; all other ducks are migratory.

Occasionally I came on parties of tufted ducks; these are considered rare.

The common teal is found frequenting ponds surrounded with bush-jungle or low trees. It does not seem to associate with other ducks. I have often shot the bird, but never made it an object of special pursuit.

It is the fashion to despise the ruddy sheldrake or Brahminy duck. I do not know exactly why; for a young one about December, corn-fed, is very eatable if better game is not forthcoming. You may treat him either as a duck or a goose: in the former case you will find the following sauce improve his flavour, or that of any duck:—Take a dessert-spoonful of fresh lemon-juice; the same quantity of Worcestershire sauce well shaken up; to this add a table-spoonful of port wine and as much of the gravy of the bird itself. If you think the Brahminy duck is a goose, stuff him with sage and onions; and if you cannot make up apple-sauce, make shift with the fruit of the papaw tree.

The Brahminy ducks come early and stay late. They are seldom in great numbers; but pairs and small parties may be met with all the morning. Unless much fired at they can generally be got at; but they take a deal of shot if fired at from any distance. They abound near all rivers. I shot many with the rifle. They are heavy birds and go a long way as food for the natives.

I do not remember to have met with other ducks in Eastern Bengal, and my letters, so far as regards bird-shooting of all kinds, are ended. Native shikarries will catch you any number of ducks of almost every kind. Teal are often kept and fattened for table; and the other geese and ducks soon get tame enough, if pinioned, to remain quiet and domesticated in garden-tanks. Hume gives a good account of the way in which they are netted; but I never saw the performance myself. I have seen men catch them by putting their heads into earthen pots and moving slowly in the water till they get amidst the birds. They then seize them by the legs and draw them under water, putting them into a bag or net attached to the waist. No decoy-ducks are used in Bengal.

Letter No. 58.

Crocodiles.—Very destructive, especially in Purneah.—Accidents.—Cut off a man's leg.—Sport with Crocodiles killed by Burmese Shikarries.—Shooting Crocodiles.—Take baits.—Way of catching them.

There is an inhabitant of the Bengal rivers and jheels which you will often see, sometimes fire at, and seldom bag; I mean the crocodile, called often the alligator, and by the natives "mugger" or "koomeer." There are two kinds of crocodiles: the long-snouted or gavial, which is common in both the Ganges and the Brahmapootra rivers above the influence of the tides. This creature confines itself to the large rivers, and is supposed to be harmless, except to fish. I never saw a large one bagged, and shall say no more about this species.

But the koomeer, the commoner crocodile with the snub nose and terrible row of teeth, is a dreaded creature, generally sluggish, but sometimes aggressive, which is still common in most of the small rivers as well as the large, and in the more extensive marshes where there are deep sheets of water, and even in smaller tanks. It seems to be equally at home in quick-running fresh or saltish waters and in still pools. It is in places exceedingly destructive to cattle, and will seize human beings if they incautiously offer themselves as a bait.

At one time the bathing-places near the villages in Backergunge and Jessore were surrounded with palisades of bamboo stakes to keep crocodiles away; but of late years the steamers with their noisy paddles seem to have driven crocodiles to stiller waters. As few are killed, I know of no other reason to account for the fact that they are not so numerous as they were.

In Purneah the deep streams and all unfrequented waters are beset with them. I have seen half a dozen at a time floating and apparently asleep on the surface of the deep pools when shooting ducks. If a gun is fired they sink gently down, hardly causing a ripple; but they are on the look out, and should a dog or any animal swim into these places he will be seized, dragged under, and nothing of him ever be seen again. The Purneah planters told me that it was certain death to a dog to be allowed to retrieve ducks, and that no man was ever allowed to go into the water to fetch birds. A Roman Catholic priest, who was passionately fond of swimming and was possessed of the notion that no crocodile would seize a man when swimming in deep water, persisted in bathing; he disappeared and his clothes were found on the bank; there is no doubt but that the crocodiles devoured him. At Chittagong, when I was magistrate, a middle-sized crocodile seized a man, who beat him off with his stick; but he let go his stick and foolishly went into the water again for it. This time the crocodile carried him off; the body was never

seen again. At Noakholly a crocodile attacked a party of men bathing and seized one, but was beaten off, and the wounded man brought to the jail hospital. The doctor, a young and inexperienced man, just out from England, and ignorant of the language, said his leg must be amputated, and that if I would assist him he would do it, though he had never performed such an operation. He had plenty of practice afterwards, during the mutiny. I agreed, and we read up the instructions in the doctor's medical works that night. The man was put under chloroform; I managed the talking and held the femoral artery with my fingers; the doctor cut off the leg above the knee and the man recovered, and we manufactured a wooden leg. He considered that as we had saved his life by cutting off his limb we were bound to support him for ever, and while I stayed at Noakholly I had to subscribe to his maintenance.

Crocodiles apparently lay eggs in holes near rivers with entrances under water. At times they make loud bellowing noises at night, and sometimes I was told they could be captured in such holes. I never saw them so caught; but once I saw two enormous fellows killed. When at Rupooshdee a planter invited me to see some sport with crocodiles, and of course I was delighted to go. This gentleman was the only man I ever saw shoot game with a flint gun: he had a nice double-barrelled gun by some crack maker, and I saw him kill six snipe running; this seemed to me a great feat.

He had secured the services of two Burmese shikarries or professed crocodile-killers, and had marked the two huge reptiles. Crocodiles have a habit of coming out of the deep water in the forenoon and of basking for hours at a little distance from the stream on dry land; and these two crocodiles did this regularly. They frequented two places about half a mile distant from each other, and boats and weapons had been prepared beforehand.

The two Burmese shikarries had a curious way of obtaining their livelihood: they were professed killers of crocodiles and otters and catchers of kingfishers. The feathers of the latter bird are worked up into beautiful ornaments with coloured shellac, and much used on the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. I do not know the exact use made of the otter-skins, except that there was a market for them. Otters are numerous all over Bengal, and kept tame by fishermen in the Soonderbunds; but otter-hunting as a sport is not resorted to in India.

The Burmese located us some distance off in a boat, while they stole very quietly forward and reconnoitred. They found no difficulty in approaching sufficiently near to the crocodiles for their purposes.

The first weapon used was a curious sort of arrow made of a light strong shaft, very thin and short and tipped with a barbed point as sharp as a needle; to the end of the arrow was attached some very strong but thin line, and to the end of this a small bladder. The shikarry discharged the arrow, without a bow, in some very peculiar manner from between the knuckles of the thumb

and forefinger of his left hand, with all the force of his right arm; the arrow pierced deep into the crocodile's body. I believe the tales about adamantine scales are all nonsense, and that a crocodile's skin is no harder to pierce than a deer's. The animal glided quietly into the stream and the shikarries came to us in the boat and we poled up and found the tell-tale bladder; the shikarry worked this gently till he could judge where the crocodile was. He was then stirred up by some hard pokes from spears and went off, but only for a little distance; we followed and the long spears were thrust into him again: on this he rose and came at the boat savagely; the planter and I promptly gave him four bullets and the men in the boat belaboured him with poles and hatchets and spears, and he fled rapidly down stream, the bladder bobbing away after him. The stream was only about six feet deep. When he stopped we roused him up again, and once more he made a feeble attack and caught it more heavily than before; he then gave in, probably he was dying, but he took a long time to give up the ghost. The dangerous part of the fun for the shikarries now began, for it seems however much the crocodile may be wounded he retains for a long time the power of hitting with his tail and snapping with his jaws, and it is not easy to manage him safely; however, he was pushed into shallow water and a noose put over his head and another over his tail, and finally the shikarry with a Burmese dao cut his head off, and even then the jaws moved ominously. There was a great deal of fun and excitement in the whole thing, and if the boat had upset, which nearly happened, while the crocodile was in full vigour the consequences might have been serious.

The management of the second crocodile was exactly like that of the first, but the planter and I took it quietly and aimed at the back of the head and the junction of the head and neck. The head of the crocodile seems to be all bone and teeth, and the brain and spinal marrow take up very little room.

This was the only occasion on which I ever met with these crocodile-hunters, and I never heard of them during twenty years; but whenever a shot could be got at the animal it was taken. I plugged many a bullet into them on the muddy banks of the Megna; generally these were acknowledged at first by a wide opening of the jaws—no snapping, they remained open; then the animal slipped into deep water and I never saw him again. Once I quite stopped an enormous one for a time, and I went tolerably close to him, he could scarcely move, but still he had sufficient life in him to prevent me actually touching him; he, too, at last gave a wriggle and slipped into the river.

I have often shot and bagged small crocodiles, about six feet long, in jheels when shooting from elephants. They took a deal of killing and parted from life most reluctantly; in all cases almost all the mahouts who got down to cut off the heads generally managed to receive nasty bites. You never can tell how long the power of motion, and consequently of mischief, may remain in a dying reptile such as a crocodile or a snake, and you can never be too cautious

in allowing your hands to reach near their mouths; they are as hard to render motionless as eels.

The heads are not easily prepared; the skin and flesh may be removed by maceration, but the teeth drop out, and can only be retained and fixed in the jaws with difficulty. I have seen tremendous heads in the verandahs of gentlemen who cultivated estates in the Soonderbunds.

A chum of mine at Rajshahye was greatly given to fishing, and every afternoon, fine or not, he might be seen in the rains with rod and line at some well-baited ghaut fishing for rhooi and mriga. Just before I left the district he discovered a tolerably sized crocodile watching him, and after some trials he persuaded the creature to mouth a dead rhooi, which was drawn in front of him at the end of the fishing-line; generally the matter ended in the crocodile getting the fish off the hooks. I went to see the sport and my chum managed to draw the crocodile within a few feet of me; it then let go and dived. I had to leave Rajshahye, and up to the time of my departure the creature had not been actually hooked.

Crocodiles are very hard to catch and yet they will take baits into their leathery mouths. I am told they can be captured by the following plan:— Fasten some large and sharp hooks to a strong line by a number of thin, small, softly twined cords: the object of this is, that the thin soft cords may pass up between the teeth and not be bitten asunder; a stout cord is either divided by the teeth or rejected entirely. The hook or hooks are to be concealed in the entrails of a sheep or some such animal and then laid on a small raft made of plantains, which is to be set to float about the water; the long rope of course is to be made fast to a tree or strong stake. I am given to understand that after much moving of the raft and bait the crocodile swallows it and thinks nothing of the thin tow about his teeth and sinks to the bottom; plenty of time should be allowed and then the rope may be drawn in. There should be a struggle, and if the barbs of the hooks get fixed into the interior of the crocodile his capture becomes certain. I, however, never saw this operation carried out, and only heard of it during late years, when I had no opportunity of testing it. I see no reason to doubt its practicability and should be glad to know more about it.

Letter No. 59.

Snakes. Terribly destructive, but to natives only.—The Cobra di Capello. No antidote or recovery when a vigorous Cobra has injected his venom.—Catching Cobras.—Mungoose and every other animal equally susceptible if really bitten.—Mungoose and Cobra.—Fond of deserted outhouses.—Move about after sunset.—How the poison is extracted.—Poisoned arrows.

The change from one reptile to another is easy; let me direct your attention from the crocodile to the snake. The crocodile may kill a few human beings in Eastern Bengal yearly, but snakes certainly kill hundreds, perhaps thousands. All magistrates of districts receive almost daily reports of deaths from snake-bites; some of these reports may be false, a few may be in reality murders, but the number of deaths from snake-bites is most appalling. I have examined scores of bodies of men, women, and children who had been killed by snakes. In the rains and inundations these deaths reach their maximum. As the waters rise the snakes get washed out of their holes and hiding-places and naturally crawl to the dry and high ground; here the native huts are built and the snakes seek shelter in the dwellings. The women of necessity come out of their doors just before daylight and touch or tread on these animals with their naked feet; in a moment the deadly bite is given, generally near the ankle; in an hour or so the woman or man is dead.

Though so many natives are killed monthly in every district in Bengal, I never could hear of one authenticated case where a European had been bitten; probably this is in some degree owing to the fact, for which I have the unimpeachable authority of Sir Joseph Fayrer, that a cobra's fang is harmless if it has to pass through a piece of good English boot-leather; the poisonous venom is expended on the outside of the boot. Two plies of good broadcloth, or a layer of broadcloth lined with silk, are a safeguard; somehow I should prefer a thick English boot, and even then I should decline to give the long fang of the *Daboia Russellii* a chance. I have known him plunge his tooth deep into the rind of my hog-spear and leave it sticking there. Perhaps the killing of snakes may not be regarded as sport: be that as it may, it was a good thing to do; and though death to snakes was sport to me, so I shall write to you some lines on the subject.

The most dangerous and very common snake all over India is the cobra—the "cobra di capello," *Naja tripudians*, the "nāga gokurra" of the natives; it has also a great variety of other names. From this snake's bite, if the snake is full-grown and vigorous and puts his fang into the flesh and injects his venom, there is no escape; death I hold to be certain, except perhaps if a bystander should have an axe in his hand and should instantaneously chop off the limb a good way above the bite. The venom spreads most rapidly; all antidotes are utterly useless.

You may hear numerous stories of bites which were not fatal; disbelieve them all. The snake may not have been a venomous one, its poison may have been just expended; it may not really have bitten with its fangs or have injected the venom; there are various ways in which a snake may have apparently bitten a man, and yet have not fairly injected the poison. If the poison of a fair-sized vigorous cobra has been injected into a man, that man will surely die in a very short time.

I studied snakes as much as I could and foolishly learnt to catch cobras. I was nearly bitten once when looking for birds' nests; I gave up birds'-nesting in India from that moment. In a former letter I mentioned a gentleman who was killed by a wild buffalo who threw him into a tree. That gentleman was more conversant with snakes of all kinds than any one I ever met; he made money by making collections of snakes for savans and museums, and understood the catching and killing of them, and how to preserve them as specimens and to keep them alive. He taught his nephew who was my assistant, and the nephew taught me, thus:—When you come on your cobra make him rear up and expand his hood. He does this generally quickly enough; but should he delay, whistle to him, imitating the snake-charmers. He will then certainly raise his head; then with a small cane or stick (the ramrod of a gun is as good a thing as any for the purpose) gently press his head to the ground (the snake will not object, he seems to like it rather). When you press his head lightly to the ground with the stick in your left hand you should seize the snake firmly with your right close behind the head, holding his neck rather tightly; then let go the stick and catch hold of the tail. The snake is powerless and you can do what you like with him. My assistant generally procured an earthern pot or kulsee, and let the snake pass into this; he stated that snakes always would go into any dark place: sometimes he killed the snake after capturing it. He was very careless and it was a wonder that he never was bitten.

When testing measurements in an island of the Megna I disturbed a cobra about a yard long, and caught it in the manner described without any difficulty. A village was near and I sent for a fowl, and applied the cobra's mouth to the fowl's thigh; it immediately seized the thigh and injected its venom with two or three vicious squeezes. I could almost see the poison squirted into the bird's leg. The fowl was put on the ground and seemed unconcerned at first and pecked up some rice-grains; it then began to stagger, turned round, sat down, fell, and in less than three minutes was dead. All this time I held the snake with both hands, and did not much like it. I threw him away a few yards, took my gun from an attendant and shot the snake. I vowed never to try to catch another cobra, and kept the vow.

The tales about the mungoose being invulnerable to the cobra's bite are false, as also is the fable that it runs off and finds a plant which is an

antidote. The mungoose (*Herpestes*), nearly allied to the ichneumon, and resembling a ferret, without the disgusting smell, is a wonderfully active little animal, and when engaged in combat with a cobra sets up on its hind legs and erects its fur and avoids all the strokes of the snake, which very possibly discharges its venom in futile endeavours to seize the sharp little mungoose. If, however, the cobra can bite the mungoose and inject the poison, the mungoose dies as quickly as any other animal. A mungoose is an engaging and amiable pet, and it will be found tame everywhere. My bearer at Rajshahye somehow managed to get a small cobra alive into a glass bottle, in which there had been preserved fruit; he brought it to me. I had a tame mungoose, not much more than half-grown. The snake was turned out in an open space and the mungoose at once went at it. The snake tried no more to escape, it raised its head and expanded the hood; the mungoose sat up with fur all on end, and the two animals kept darting at each other almost as if in play; suddenly the mungoose made a grab at the snake, seized it by the head and ran off with it. I caught the mungoose, which was generally most gentle; it let go the snake and bit savagely at me; it then seized the snake and ran into a drain underneath the house: when next I saw them the snake's head was gone; I believe the mungoose had eaten it. Another mungoose was kept in a neighbouring house; it was fastened to a kulsee, or earthern pot, in which it lived, with a string not more than a yard long, and was kept at the open doorway. Even when thus tied the creature managed to catch and kill a cobra.

Pigs certainly catch and eat snakes; I have seen them do it, and when driven in herds across the marshy ground where they root, they are said to kill all the snakes they meet with. I cannot say that the one I saw eaten was a cobra. If a hog can kill a snake with impunity, it must be either that he seizes the snake by the head, or that the snake is unable to fix his fangs into the pig and to inject his venom. The hide of a hog from the knee upwards is hard and flat, almost like a board, and it may be that the cobra cannot make an effectual dart, and the venom may be shed outside and never injected into the blood. Cobras as a rule do not frequent marshy wet ground, they prefer dry. But this is certain, if a cobra is made to bite a pig in a tender place, such as the inner side of the thigh, the pig dies as soon as any other animal.

Cobras seem to find out unused outhouses and deserted gardens and compounds. At Tippera I took a house which had long been empty, and I put a number of fowls and ducks into the old fowl-house; the second night, about 9.30 P.M., there was a great commotion in the fowl-house and the dogs barked. We got lights and went in, and two large cobras, which seemed dazed or blinded by the sudden glare, were killed with sticks. The only three ducks and several fowls had been bitten and all died very quickly. At Mymensing my compound had long been disused, and was full of heaps

consisting of rubbish, brickbats, clods of earth, stumps, and roots; these were nearly all tenanted by cobras. We killed a great many, but afterwards I suffered no annoyance.

A cobra is easily killed by a blow from a stick, but it writhes about for a long time, and even after it appears to be dead, will move and even bite if touched; so be very careful not to handle a freshly killed snake till you are certain all power of convulsive movement has disappeared.

I never saw cobras moving about in sunshine, but as soon as the sun sets they are on the move and are very active just before dark. The last ride I took on my own Arab in India was round the Dacca racecourse. As I left the park-like place, just at the ruined old gateway, a large cobra raised himself quite close to my horse's leg; it made a wave or half-stroke and sank down and glided off; it was a near thing. Next morning I started for England. A valuable horse was killed in its stable at Berhampore while I was at Rajshahye.

Cobras do not seem to frequent wet ground, and I saw few when snipe-shooting, but I met numbers when quail-shooting; they often lie in the grassy "aisles" which separate the plots of rice from each other, after the ground has dried up and there is only dry stubble left. Cobras lay several eggs. I have often found snakes' eggs, but to what snake they belonged I had no means of telling. The snakes of the cobra tribe (that is, *Naja tripudians* and *Ophiophagus*) always raise their heads to the sound of a flute or soft whistle; I do not know why; other snakes seem to lie still. I have made the cobra at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, raise himself occasionally by whistling to him, but not always will he dance to my piping; the plate glass in front of the cage is thick, and he may be sleepy and decline to be charmed. The snake-charmers of course declare that their snakes have fangs; this is false, the fangs are extracted, pulled out by jerking a piece of tough leather after it has been fairly pierced. This has to be done continually, for the fangs are reproduced and quickly grow. But the snakemen generally keep some snakes with fangs unextracted; they do not, however, play with these; they are kept for experiments for which you pay.

The poison is easily extracted; I saw my assistant extract it often. A piece of tough plantain-leaf is bound over a spoon; the snake is held by the right hand, as when caught, and the spoon offered to his mouth with the left. The snake bites vigorously through the leaf, and the venom, sometimes more than a dozen drops, is shed into the spoon.

The poisoned arrows with which tigers and leopards are shot are prepared from venom thus extracted. A little cotton-wool is saturated with the poison and bound with thread on to the barb of the arrow. Sometimes this poison is mixed with the juice of certain acrid milky plants and kept in vials, or made into powder with dry stuff. The native doctors pretend to keep these preparations as drugs, and at times they will sell them. I am not aware that

the venom, even if diluted to a great extent, is of any real medical benefit. The poison of the viper is supposed to be used in a common homæopathic medicine (lachesis); possibly a cobra's venom might be of as much benefit.

Letter No. 60.

The Ophiophagus. Largest venomous snake known. Scarce. I shoot one. Not known in many districts. Feeds on Cobras. Have one fed before me by the snakemen.—The Daboia. The first I killed. The Frenchman kills one with his hands. Sowdaugor Mahout catches these snakes.—The Bungarus. Rather aggressive. Eats other snakes.—The Kerait.—The Green Viper.—The Python.—Other harmless snakes.—Water-Snakes.

The only other snake of the cobra tribe (that is, a colubrine snake which expands its hood) is the ophiophagus (*Elaps ophiophagus*)—the hamadryad, the "sunkerchor" or "rājnāg" or "snake-king" of the natives. This is the largest and most powerful venomous snake known in India, and probably in the world. It is to all intents and purposes a gigantic cobra of a brownish-green or dark olive-green colour, with transverse light-coloured marks at regular distances all down its back, without spectacles on its hood. This reptile is luckily very scarce; it reaches a length of about thirteen feet or longer, and is thick in proportion. It is a most terrible animal, and is said to be aggressive, and to attack without being provoked or interfered with, whereas the ordinary cobra will always get out of the way if not touched or frightened. I once killed an ophiophagus, the only one I ever saw wild. It was at Narage in Cuttack. We had come back from a bad morning's sport and were preparing for breakfast a tiffin, when I heard a tremendous uproar and cries of "Sāmp! Sāmp!" I caught up a shot-gun and rushed out of the door of the bungalow, and there I saw a monster of a snake quietly gliding across some laterite rock; it was only about twenty yards off, and I gave it the best part of a charge of No. 5 shot. Its struggles and contortions were tremendous, but it was powerless to get away; in course of time its struggles ceased, and after poking it about for some time with a long bamboo I judged that it was dead and presently handled it. An Irish friend standing in the doorway all the time swore by all his gods that if I brought the brute near to the bungalow he would shoot me; he was terribly excited, so I took the snake to a distance to examine and skin. It was fully thirteen feet long and extremely thick and powerful; the hood expanded to nearly a foot. The fangs were not very long, and the points only just protruded beyond the

poison-bags, which were exceedingly large. I suppose a blow from a stick might have killed such a snake. I should, however, have been sorry to have tried the experiment; the chances were that the snake would have bitten a man before he could have been disabled.

How the snakemen manage to capture this monster alive I do not know, but I have constantly seen him with them and have studied him. The men at Dacca had two: they said they came from the Soonderbunds; but I doubt it, because neither native nor European connected with the Soonderbunds could tell me they had ever seen one wild, and the Deputy Collector I have before referred to as so conversant with snakes was stationed near the Soonderbunds and could never hear of one. They are found, but rarely, all along the hills on the frontiers of Eastern Bengal. They do some good, as apparently they feed chiefly on cobras. I arranged with the Dacca snakemen to show me how they were fed. I received notice that a king-snake was hungry and about to be fed, so he was brought to my house in his basket. The snakeman first secured a fair-sized cobra out of another basket in his left hand. This snake he said had his fangs entire: this of course was a lie. Another snakeman piped and the great ophiophagus raised its head and spread its hood. The man then took hold of it behind the head with his right hand and offered the cobra with his left. The ophiophagus at once seized the cobra and the two snakes were let go. The cobra writhed and struggled and bit the larger snake as best it could about the jaw, but was soon overpowered and gradually began to disappear head foremost down the larger snake's throat. The snake seemed to know his keeper. I approached and the ophiophagus at once began to disgorge the cobra. How he managed this with teeth all pointing backwards I cannot tell. I retreated to a distance. The cobra was then entirely swallowed, and the big snake settled himself again comfortably in his basket. This entertainment took up more than half an hour. I have no more thoroughly reliable information to give about *Elaps ophiophagus*.

The next most venomous snake is a most beautiful viper (*Daboia Russellii*), Russell's viper—the "tic polonga" of Ceylon, and the "bora" of the Ooriahs and Bengalees. I constantly killed this snake. My first introduction to him was at Rajshahye in early days. I must premise that when I was in India Sir J. Fayrer's book on the 'Thanatophidia of India' was not written. I had no access to good works for reference, and my knowledge was obtained from the Deputy Collector above referred to, his nephew (my assistant), and natives, who, as a rule, are well versed in snake matters.

I had left the shooting-party and the elephants and ridden alone after a hog, which I killed; as I was returning to the shooters I came across a beautiful snake, nearly four feet long, spotted with leopard-like spots of a bright chocolate colour. I rode up and pinned him to the ground with my hog-spear. The snake remained motionless. I did not like to put my foot on him, so went off for a pliant stick; with this I went to him, leading the

horse with the left hand and holding the stick in my right. As I came near, the snake, which had only been held by a thin bit of skin, got loose and was gliding away. I dropped the stick, caught hold of the spear, and made a dab with it at the snake; this time the spear passed through the thick part of the body not much in front of the tail. In an instant the viper struck at the bamboo spear-shaft with such force that his long fang was broken off and remained sticking in the shaft. He was securely pinned to the ground, and I had no difficulty in beating him about the head and killing him. The snake was tied up with a "lot" or creeping-plant and taken to the tents. The bearer declared it was a bora, a most deadly snake, and of the sort which had bitten and killed the judge's bearer a few days before. This I doubt, because we all understood that the bearer had been bitten by a cobra.

However, shortly after this a daboia was discovered in the bath-room attached to the bungalow at the indigo-factory occupied by Mons. Deveria, the Frenchman I referred to as having killed a tiger on foot. This gentleman went into his bath-room, saw the snake, instantly seized it by the tail, whirled it round his head, and struck it two or three times on the brick floor; this completely smashed the snake's head. I saw its body, and it was undoubtedly a daboia.

My mahout Sowdaugor was a great snake-catcher and very reckless. He too had been taught by that Deputy Collector when at Mymensing. I never saw him press down the snake with a rod as I have described, but he caught numbers of snakes of all sorts and sent them alive to the Deputy Collector. His movements were so rapid, and generally in jungle and with his back to me, that I never exactly made out why he did not get bit. He used to jump off his elephant, leaving the animal to my guidance; in a moment afterwards he had the snake's neck in his hand. He said he caught them by their tails, swung them under his armpit, and held them there while he slipped his hand up to the back of the head. He then gave the snake some of his clothing to amuse itself with, and on which to expend its venom. He then wrapped the reptiles up in loose cloth and took very little trouble with them. I have seen him catch snakes scores of times, and know how he managed after he once had got his hand to their heads; but, as I said, I never quite understood how he managed that part of the feat. I rather discouraged him, as I did not like the idea of having living venomous snakes at large, or even in earthern pots or boxes. At the same time Sowdaugor received good prices for his snakes. The young of this snake, the daboia, are born alive, and Sowdaugor told me he had at times come on parcels of a dozen live little daboias at once. I never saw any of these happy parties.

Another snake which is far from uncommon and is also very venomous, though not quite so bad as the three above mentioned, is the bungarus (*Bungarus fasciatus*). I know of no familiar English name. It is the "sankni" of the natives.

This is a powerful thick snake, which can never be mistaken; it has a ridge along its back, and its colours are in alternate rings of blue-black and light yellow. It is very poisonous, and I think more common or at any rate more often seen in the rains than the cobra. It is rather aggressive, and in the inundations it gets on to the embankments and roads and elevated pieces of land, and will readily bite persons approaching it. I heard a noise in a ditch at Noakholly, outside my compound, and found a bungarus with a snake nearly as large as itself in its inside; the tail was just hanging out of the swallower's mouth. I struck with a stick and killed both snakes, for the swallowed one was by no means dead, and writhed about even after I pulled him out from the other's mouth; the one snake was very little larger than the other.

The second night of my stay in my own house at Mymensing the bearer brought in a large bungarus dead or quivering, fixed in a cleft bamboo. His face was as white as a black man's could be. He was much alarmed, and thought the snake's partner would to a certainty come and bite him in the night; so I told him to sleep in the verandah upstairs; but we never saw another snake of this kind about the house.

There is another smaller venomous snake of the class Bungarus (*Bungarus cæruleus*); this is common, and is known as the "kerait." It is much smaller than the last described, of a brown colour, with dirty white transverse marks on its body; it is very venomous, and is apt to come about dwellings. I once killed one at Rajshahye, under a piano at which a lady was singing; it caused a good deal of commotion. These five snakes are the really deadly snakes of Eastern Bengal known to me; there appear to be several others in Upper and Central India, but I never met with them.

There is another poisonous, but not deadly, snake I met with at times. A green viper, with a very broad head and a stripe along its sides (*Trimeresurus*). I know of no common name for this snake except "green snake." It is rather common among thatching-grass, especially when it has been cut, and we found it when beating for quails and hares. One bit a man once when I was out: he suffered much pain, and was ill for some days; but the doctor said he would soon be all right, and he recovered. I never heard of a death from the bite of the green snake.

I have often met with pythons when beating up heavy jungles. These huge snakes are commonly called boa constrictors, and grow to an enormous size, and are sometimes of the circumference of a man's leg. Most that I have seen have been long, but not nearly so bulky. At the foot of the Assam Hills I once killed two pythons at one shot with No. 5 shot. They are not venomous, but are destructive to small quadrupeds. A planter at Purneah told me that he once turned a wild sow out of some grass with a litter of young ones. A large python made a dart, as the planter thought, at one of the squeakers and enfolded it in his coils. The planter then shot the snake.

As it uncoiled it appeared that it had caught two young pigs in its deadly grasp; they were both quite dead, though the snake had only that instant enfolded them.

You will meet with several kinds of harmless snakes in the course of your sporting career. The dhamin (*Ptyas mucosus*) is the most common. You will find him coiled up on tufts of herbage in the best uncultivated spots for snipe-shooting in autumn. In the Doorga Poojah holidays I always came on some lying on the tops of thick bushes; they seem to live in or near wet swampy ground.

There is a long thin chocolate snake that gets into rooms, and into Venetian blinds, and about one's boots. I do not know its name; it is not very uncommon. Besides this there are some pretty little snakes common in the grass. All these are said to be harmless by such Europeans as know anything about them. The natives, as a rule, declare every snake to be deadly. I advise you to play no tricks with snakes; a rare but dangerous snake might at any time be accidentally met.

The freshwater snakes are innocuous, but the sea-snakes are most deadly. One officer of Her Majesty's navy was bitten by a small sea-snake, and though the teeth are so small as to be almost invisible, and though the punctures could not be seen, death soon ensued. These snakes are unknown to me; they are brought to shore in numbers in nets by the fishermen on both sides of the Bay of Bengal, and are found in the salt nullahs of the Soonderbunds and in the tidal estuaries of the large rivers. They are fully described in Sir J. Fayrer's work, and I have seen several in bottles. They all have flat tails, and I can tell you very little more about them, for I never saw one alive.

Letter No. 61.

Jackal-hunting. Too slow for real sport. Pleasant amusement if fogs do not interfere in the early mornings. Sport with hounds.—Foxes. Useless for sport, feed much on doves. —Hares and coursing.—Jackal's bites.—Mad Jackals and dogs.—Immediate application of lunar caustic generally a preventive of subsequent hydrophobia.—Fishing not sufficiently learnt by me.—Conclusion.

I have written to you about sport with small shot and with bullet, from the howdah and with the spear; but I have said nothing about sport with hounds. But fox-hounds and greyhounds are both used occasionally in Eastern Bengal, though the sport shown cannot be compared with the fun that is carried on under the same names in England.

Fox-hunting or hunting with fox-hounds in Bengal means the hunting of

the jackal. The jackal, though larger than a fox, is not nearly so fast, and he has no power of keeping up his running for any length of time. Packs of hounds are annually imported into Bengal from England. There is always one pack hunted from Calcutta, and generally one or two more are got up at some districts. The sport gives nice exercise in the mornings, and it is extremely pleasant and reminds one of home to hear the cheery cry of the pack and to gallop after hounds even for a short time. But jackals cannot really run. Scent is usually bad; if it is not, the English hounds, if in good health, run into their game in ten minutes or so if the run takes place in open country. Most commonly the jackal sticks to interminable villages, from which he cannot be dislodged, and where there are so many jackals on foot in the course of a mile or two that hunting (according to English ideas) is impossible. Where the country is open, as, for instance, where there are wide plains interspersed with patches of grass, the jackal is too slow to live before the English fox-hound. I carried the horn and hunted a pack of fox-hounds at one time or another for six seasons in the districts of the twenty-four pergunnahs—Jessore, Dacca, and Mymensing. The best sport was got in indigo-grounds. Scent was best after those refreshing storms which so often come about sunset, and next morning generally hounds ran well. There was one way in which occasionally we got about thirty minutes' galloping; that was when the jackal just managed to make good his entry into some small detached jungle, and when the cry of the hounds started a fresh jackal away from the further side. If the pack was then judiciously lifted and quickly laid on to the fresh jackal, the hunt went on without a check, and everybody was delighted, especially those who were not up to the trick. This manœuvre is of course terribly contrary to the laws of English fox-hunting; and yet you will hardly believe me when I say that I saw it perpetrated by one of the best sportsmen of the Pytchley hounds at the famous covert of Crick, when Mr. Villiers was master and Charles Payne huntsman. But I kept counsel, and neither master nor huntsman knew of it.

Fogs in the early morning in the pleasant cold season in January and February interfere greatly with hunting: in the fog you cannot hunt, after it rises there is no scent. A very sporting and rich planter at Dacca, after much conversation with me about hunting jackals with English fox-hounds, thought that large beagles would answer, and he imported about ten couple; we took them out with about four couple of fox-hounds which had been kept through the summer in India. Hounds kept in India in the plains throughout the hot weather deteriorate greatly in pace and powers of scent. We drew a very nice standing crop and a jackal got well away unseen and without clamour. The little hounds made the most charming music and ran very merrily; in about ten minutes we were running merrily across an open plain, and we ran from scent into view. Alas! it was all over; as soon as the harriers or beagles saw what a huge beast they were after they threw up all chase, came to my

horse's heels, and nothing could induce them to run jackals again. The old fox-hounds ran into this jackal easily, and I did all I could to encourage the little hounds, but failed.

In a new country jackals take to the open; but after a season, when a number have been killed by hounds, according to my experience, as soon as the experienced jackals hear the sound of hound and horn they at once go to ground. There are so many jackals that hunting about villages is almost a farce; and if you have really wide plains with detached jungles scattered over them the best way is to send the field in all directions as soon as it is light, or in the fading moonlight if possible, to view the animal. When a jackal is viewed no noise should be made; but intimation should be given quietly to the huntsman, who will then lay his hounds on the trail.

It is no use going near the carcase of a dead cow or animal in the early morning; any jackal near it is so gorged as to be unable to run.

The meets of fox-hounds for jackal-hunting take place at daybreak. The hounds are sent on in the dark either on wheels or in couples. The sport is popular: early rising is the rule in India, and subscriptions are generally easily got up; the sport ends before 10 A.M., for two reasons—the sun gets hot and then scent fails; officials can get back in time for office-work. I wonder hunting a drag or expeditions against hog-deer are never organized; had my spare time not been wholly devoted to hog-hunting, or had the latter sport been unattainable, I think I should have got up the hunting of hog-deer with fox-hounds. There were very many countries where it could have been attempted and the hog-deer would not so readily have retreated to the villages.

Foxes are common in most districts—not in Noakholly or Chittagong. But the Bengal fox is a pretty little pet, not so heavy as a hare, a light grey in colour, with beautiful brush and ears; he leaves no scent, and only runs in rings, unless pursued by one greyhound. Two English greyhounds are too much for this small animal; but if one greyhound is set after him alone the fox's wonderful power of turning saves his life for a little while, and he may reach his earth or some place of safety. In the early morning these foxes may be found in the light crops, in mustard, and especially in the flax or linseed which is grown for oil.

When first I went to Mymensing several colonies of foxes lived under the houses and offices in the station; it was pretty to see them playing in the evenings. They cared nothing for ordinary dogs; but after coursing hares came into fashion and swift English greyhounds were introduced the poor little foxes had a bad time of it and disappeared.

I once tried to find out what these foxes fed upon. I knew several of their earths in high sandy spots, and I was astonished to find that they fed apparently almost entirely on doves. Doves are very common; but as they roost in trees and are active and wary, it was curious that the little fox should be able to catch these birds in such numbers.

Hares are numerous in some districts and scarce in others; but I believe that they are much more common than is suspected. I never met any nor heard much of them when shooting snipe and quail at Jessore; but no sooner were fox-hounds introduced than hares turned up in nearly every village. At Mymensing they were common, and in some of the sandy churs covered with light growth of tamarisk they positively swarmed. Their flesh is dry and they are poor when roasted, and Indian cooks do not know how to make proper hare-soup.

In the indigo-lands of Mymensing they were numerous, especially where a low flowering shrub, with a flower like heliotrope, grew; and here we used to have fair sport with greyhounds. The hares were hard to beat out, so I introduced elephants when these elephants had no other work to do; the hares apparently dreaded the feet of these huge creatures and at once took to the open. In this way I have seen a dozen hares coursed and killed before 10 A.M.; but good English greyhounds are too fast for the hare of Eastern Bengal.

A jackal bites severely, and every time the hounds killed one some got so badly bitten that they could not be used for some days; and with our limited number of hounds this was a serious matter. I had the end of my hunting-crop covered with deer-skin, and as soon as a jackal was run into I dismounted, and giving the jackal the end of the hunting-crop to bite, I drove a knife into his heart and opened out the wound. This at once killed the animals, who were given to shamming, and often got up after being left for dead; at the same time hounds were protected and we did not lose the use of them.

Jackals go mad occasionally and cause great loss of life. I have known instances where several persons were bit by them before they were killed. Once, at the head station of Noakholly, a mad jackal bit a great number of persons, men and women; the men were all cauterized immediately by the civil surgeon, and none were affected by the bites; but two women who were not cauterized died of hydrophobia. In my own experience, and I knew of a number of cases both amongst Europeans and natives, cauterization with lunar caustic prevented evil consequences, and in many where cauterization was not resorted to death from hydrophobia ensued. It is advisable to carry a few remedies and medical appliances always with you on all shikar expeditions, such as lunar caustic, quinine, cholera medicine, bandages, and surgical needles. If no caustic is at hand a little gunpowder should be squeezed into the wounds made by the teeth; a little cone of powder should be made above this and fired off. The sooner cauterization is performed the better.

Dogs often go mad. I had to shoot the best pointer I ever had and also a hound at Mymensing, and I have known of many instances amongst the dogs of friends. As soon as any sign of madness is perceived, and there is no more marked symptom than a change in the tone of the bark, the dog should

be kept separate; if after this further signs show themselves the dog should be at once shot.

Pointers, spaniels, and terriers live fairly enough in Bengal if carefully treated, kept out of the sun's heat as much as possible, and fed properly; but there is not enough use for them in the sports of Eastern Bengal to warrant my writing about them.

Fishing is a legitimate sport, and is carried on by its votaries chiefly in ponds. Fish of great size are caught by rod and line; but it is a sport with which I am not conversant and therefore not competent to give instruction upon. On the confines of Sylhet I have heard that great sport is to be obtained with mahseer fish; but I never saw any of it and know no particulars, and believe there is no mahseer-fishing elsewhere in Eastern Bengal.

I believe I have now told you all I know about sport in this part of India, from a jack snipe to a rhinoceros. My letters have been strictly confined to the districts I have mentioned, with the exception of some notes on sport in Cuttack. The sport in more Western Bengal probably may be carried on differently. There are other animals to be met with—the gour, the neelghye, and the wolf; of the pursuit of these I have written nothing, and I have confined my remarks to matters of which I was personally cognizant. Hence it may seem that these letters are too egotistical; but it could scarcely be otherwise, as in a great deal of my sport I was alone. I have also avoided giving hearsay tales. Whenever I have written about what I have not seen, I have stated the fact. For the most part I have restricted myself to the events which occurred before my own eyes; many would have been entirely forgotten but for the diary which I always kept. Sport in Bengal, if strict temperance is followed, is health-giving and cheering; it made my long sojourn in India bright, and the memories of the hunting and shooting parties, and of the many good fellows who joined in them—alas! how many have already joined the majority—are most pleasant to look back upon. May you find as much satisfaction, enjoyment, and pleasure in the sports I have described as I did.—*Vale*!

POSTSCRIPT.

After these letters were in the press, I had the good fortune to obtain from Mr. Lionel Inglis, the gentleman who drew the sketch of the spearing of a leopard, a promise that he would draw a scene of a real scrimmage with a tiger, and a picture of an old blue boar fighting, as occurred at Tippera.

These two sketches are therefore added to those referred to in the letters; and I beg to express my warm thanks to Mr. Inglis and also to Mr. Richard P. Jenkins, of my own service, who allowed me to copy two other hog-hunting pictures. These additions to my work, from sportsmen who have handled spear and gun in Bengal, have added greatly to the value of the book, and will, I believe, be allowed, by all readers competent to judge, to be strictly truthful representations of events which, though most exciting, are quite common to all who have enjoyed the sports to which these letters refer.

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